

7-2002

## Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland, 1948-1965

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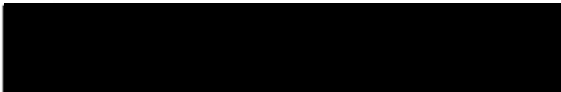



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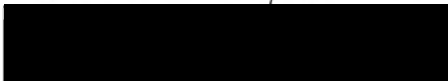
## THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Beka Smith for the Master of Arts in History were presented July 12, 2002, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

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## ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Beka Smith for the Master of Arts in History presented July 12, 2002.

Title: Gay Bars, Vice, and Reform in Portland, 1948-1965

The city of Portland adopted different policies toward gay bars between 1948 and 1965. Portland's conservative mayors, generally uninterested in changing the city or promoting growth, ignored gay bars. Reform mayors instigated campaigns against gay bars to gain public, political, and business support for their broader economic and social goals. They were able to use crackdowns on gay bars as popular components of their reform initiatives because Portland, in comparison to other cities, professed conservatism and morality and had little economic or cultural incentive to tolerate gay bars. Blaming Portland's vice on outsiders, reform mayors argued that their actions protected Portland's traditional reputability, despite the city's long history of tolerating vice and gay bars.

This thesis focuses on the reform mayoral administrations of Dorothy McCullough Lee and Terry Schrunk and their policies toward gay bars and vice. Chapter two discusses Lee's attack on all criminality in Portland, and deals briefly with why the previous administration, under Frank Riley, was rejected as corrupt.

Terry Schrunk's later reform, centered in suppressing sexual deviance and promoting economic development downtown, is discussed in chapter four.

Chapter three describes growing awareness of queer communities, including changing definitions of queerness and perceived threats. These changes in popular beliefs about queerness, although not the direct cause of actions against gay bars in Portland, influenced the types of vice associated with gay bars, arguments used to justify anti-queer actions, and the level of priority placed on suppressing Portland's queer community.

This thesis incorporates primary and secondary sources on gay bars, Portland, and queer history. It relies heavily on city council minutes and newspaper articles, but also draws from sources including City Club Bulletins, letters from Schrunk's constituents, interviews, popular psychological works, and comparisons with articles about other cities, such as Miami, San Francisco, and New York.

GAY BARS, VICE, AND REFORM IN PORTLAND, 1948-1965

by

BEKA SMITH

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS  
in  
HISTORY

Portland State University  
2002

## **Acknowledgements**

A lot of great people helped me with this thesis. I was lucky to find people willing to talk about their experiences, as well as suggest other sources. Ric King was particularly helpful and a lot of fun to hang out with. Pat Young provided excellent information and contacts. Archivists at the city and OHS libraries found numerous sources. I am particularly grateful for the box of letters Todd Welch pulled from the warehouse.

My family and friends put up with my thesis griping and expressed their support throughout. I especially thank Laurie Gallagher for her generosity, patience, and advice that sentences over four lines were probably too long. Other students made me laugh and helped me find solutions for various problems. Tiffany Shumaker always seemed to have practical answers about what I needed to do to actually graduate. Lancia Roselya amazed me by reading a chapter in a day and providing helpful, encouraging suggestions.

I thank all the professors on my committee. Shawn Smallman asked interesting questions and provided a friendly presence at the defense. Patti Duncan helped far more than I could have expected from an outside examiner, offering insightful suggestions without making me feel daunted. Ann Mussey's accessibility, kindness, and ideas were a great help throughout the process, often making things seem a bit clearer. Patricia Schechter provided rigorous and thought provoking advising, contributing to a better thesis.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The Portland City Council adopted different policies toward gay bars during the 1950s and 1960s. The council only tried to close gay bars during two periods, in 1950 and 1964-65, during reform mayors' administrations, despite consensus throughout the time period that they were criminal. Mayors' goals and the public's perception of the size and characteristics of Portland's queer community were primary factors shaping city policy toward gay bars.

In Portland, non-reform mayoral administrations favored local government non-intervention and, in some cases, accepted pay-offs. They ignored gay bars and vice. Reform mayors Dorothy McCullough Lee and Terry Schrunk initiated aggressive anti-vice campaigns that included gay bars. However, they connected gay bars with different kinds of vice and placed different levels of priority on suppressing gay bars, based both on their political and economic agendas and public perception of the size and threat of Portland's queer community. Lee focused on gambling, but included gay bars as a secondary, less dangerous, vice issue in her effort to suppress all criminality in Portland. Sexual deviance, including gay bars and obscene literature and entertainment, emerged as the central target of Schrunk's initiative to reshape Portland's downtown for economic development. Schrunk drew on ideas formed during increased discussion of sexual deviance in the 1950s. He claimed that gay bars should be closed because Portland's queer community was growing bigger, unashamed, and threatening.

Urban historians often omit queer communities from their discussions of cities' compositions, policies, and political changes. Even urban historians of Portland who focus on vice, such as Robert Donnelly and Joseph Uris, completely neglect the inclusion of gay bars with vice and political motivations for targeting queer communities. Uris's Marxist historical approach includes some analysis of how race and class influenced local government's vice policies, but generally divides interested groups into elites with power and the public at large. This elides divisions within the public, particularly sexual identity and gender, that were important in political constructions of vice policy. Donnelly addresses these differences even less.<sup>1</sup>

National queer histories have, understandably, focused on national events and changes, and include little analysis of how national trends influenced local debates and policies toward queer communities. Local queer histories most often explore queer community development and politicization, or a particular scandal followed by suppression of local queer individuals and institutions. While queer community development, politicization, and scandals are highly important topics, less has been written about local governments' motivations in making policies toward queer communities.

Historians have shown how politicians used gay bars and queer communities to influence elections. However, politicians in Portland did not secure electoral victories by suppressing or promising to suppress local queer communities. Gay bars were instead utilized by reform mayors, already elected, to draw support for and legitimize

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Donnelly, "Postwar Vice Crime and Political Corruption in Portland" (MA thesis, Portland

their broader economic, political, and social reform initiatives. This seems counterintuitive after the rise of the religious right in the 1980s, when queer-blaming and moralism is more associated with conservative than reform politicians. Analyzing earlier local governments that took an active, instigating role in formulating policy toward gay bars is important because it shows the different construction of queers as a political issue in the 1950s and 1960s. Portland offers a particularly illustrative example of the relationship between policy toward queers, vice, conservatism, and reform during the 1950s and 1960s. Connections between the issues of reform, vice, and queers were particularly clear in Portland because the city's mayors were highly influential, clearly differentiated by reform or conservative status, and quite explicit in connecting queer communities with reform goals.

### **Terms**

This topic includes terms that require definition. I use "gay bars" to refer to drinking establishments with a majority of queer customers, whether they were primarily gay men, lesbians, or mixed. I occasionally separate "lesbian bars" from the general category of gay bars to indicate that an establishment's customers were primarily lesbians. Groups that would now be called intersex, transgender, and bisexual were included in the council debates, but I do not separate them from the general category of gay bar customers because they did not dominate the clientele of individual bars in Portland. I also include drinking locations that only attracted a queer clientele at night. The designation of gay bars is not exact, and I discuss

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State University, 1997) and Joseph Uris, "Trouble in River City: An Analysis of an Urban Vice Probe"



disagreement about which Portland locations should be considered gay bars in chapter four.

“Vice” refers to activities considered both criminal and immoral and handled by the police bureau’s vice squad, such as prostitution, gambling, and gay bars. “Crackdown” is a concise description of the two periods of increased city activity and debate concerning gay bars, although the actions were not particularly effective or complete. “Suppression” describes efforts to close or limit gay bars. “Containment” was the default policy applied by the police bureau and city council to vice operations, particularly gay bars and prostitution. This policy permitted vice operations in a small part of the city perceived to be disreputable without official city or police actions to close them. Containment meant that the council did not make laws specifically prohibiting gay bars and positively recommended their liquor license renewals, but allowed police surveillance and arrests of individuals within gay bars. Although the results of containment were similar to “benign neglect” or “limited tolerance,” which scholars such as Fred Fejes describe, containment differed because proponents defended containment as an active and effective city policy rather than a lack of city action.

I use the word “queer,” although it refers to an identity developed after the 1950s and 1960s, except in quotations and describing other peoples’ perspectives.<sup>2</sup> “Gay men and lesbians,” “gay men, lesbians, and people who would now be called intersex, transgender, and bisexual,” “homosexuals,” “sexual minorities,” “same-

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(Ph.D. diss., Portland State University, 1981), 231.

sexers,” and “sexual deviants” each have drawbacks and benefits.<sup>3</sup> Queer is concise, emphasizes perceived difference rather than precise classification, and includes the categories that were mentioned in Portland’s debates about gay bars. Unlike the term “sexual deviate,” which some people used in the 1950s and 1960s, queer excludes groups like coercive sexual criminals. Nebulous terms such as deviate were important to contemporary debates about gay bars, but often incorporated multiple “expert” and citizen definitions. Chapter three discusses the use of terms like deviate despite the lack of agreed upon definitions. I use “non-queer” rather than “heterosexual” because of my choice of queer.<sup>4</sup> I use “sexual deviants” when describing non-normative, but not only queer, groups. The use of queer and sexual deviants is not intended in a derogatory sense.

### Methodology

I establish the context of Portland’s gay bars with secondary sources about the history of Oregon, Portland, gay bars, queer communities, and the postwar United States. Newspapers, City Club bulletins, Schrunck’s correspondence, and city council,

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<sup>2</sup> Although the use of queer and gay bars is somewhat contradictory, I do not use “queer bars,” because the meaning and use of gay bars is already somewhat established in popular and historical discourse.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Leila Rupp uses “same-sex love and sexuality” to avoid the terms gay, lesbian, and homosexual during periods when these terms were not positively claimed by the people in question. While terms such as homosexual would be more accepted than queer in the 1950s and 1960s, they fail to include all the groups relevant to Portland’s city council decisions. Queer is not wholly incongruous with how the council considered the targeted groups. Group distinctions within queer were often less important than general non-normative status. For example, the councilors easily lumped bisexuals into their discussion of lesbians. When group differences were more important, I try to use more specific terms. Using a less tightly defined category like queer also avoids some historical dissension about identities. I often lacked information to judge how individual queers would want to be classified. For example, historians have claimed women who passed as men as either lesbians or transgender. However, whether considered lesbian or transgender, they can still be termed queer.

<sup>4</sup> Although the use of queer and non-queer reinforces a binary view of sexuality, I found it nearly impossible to discuss these issues clearly without somehow differentiating between those the council considered sexually abnormal, or queer, and those that it did not.

police, and Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) records offer more specific information about Portland's policies toward gay bars. These sources help document the motivations and actions of politicians, police officials, OLCC employees, civic organizations, and journalists. Letters to Schrunk and newspaper editorials help evaluate citizens' perceptions of actions against bars, although they are far from conclusive. A small number of interviews with gay bar customers, owners, lawyers, and OLCC officials fill in gaps in information about Portland's policies and actions toward gay bars, groups' motivations, and tentatively explore the perceptions and responses of gay bar customers.

### **Initiators of Crackdowns on Gay Bars**

Although crackdowns on gay bars occurred in cities throughout the U.S., instigators varied. Historian Fred Fejes points to the media's role in initiating anti-gay bar actions in Miami in the 1950s, while Nan Boyd blames San Francisco's police. George Chauncey argues that the media began a campaign against New York's drag clubs in the 1930s, which led to a police response of harassment, but credits the state liquor authority with initiating a more extensive campaign to limit queer public drinking establishments.<sup>5</sup> In Portland, reformist mayors initiated anti-gay bar campaigns. Crackdowns on gay bars in U.S. cities often occurred in election years for incumbent mayors' political gain, but Portland's crackdowns occurred in the middle of

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<sup>5</sup> George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), 331-332.

reform administrations, suggesting that anti-queer rhetoric and actions were intended to garner support for reform initiatives rather than win elections.<sup>6</sup>

In Portland, mayors' attitudes toward gay bars and vice were particularly influential because mayors received substantial media coverage and the police department fell under mayoral, rather than council, jurisdiction. Each mayor was responsible for supervising the police department and delineating expectations and priorities. Historian Robert Donnelly, describing a long history of corruption and vice in Portland, emphasizes mayors' limited options in policy-making. He argues that Portland's commission style of government and the power of local economic and political elites constrained mayors. However, while public and business desires influenced mayors' effectiveness, mayors' positions on vice and reform were extremely important in determining city policies toward gay bars.

Portland's non-reform mayoral administrations were tightly connected with long-established business and real estate interests, with roots in the nineteenth century, that had little incentive to eliminate vice, partly because many were vice property owners. The non-reform, conservative administrations of Earl Riley, between 1941 and 1949, and Fred Peterson, from 1953 to 1957, did not try to deny gay bars' liquor licenses, did not emphasize civic betterment or reform, and at times told critics that the government had no responsibility to regulate morality. Reformist mayors Lee and Schunk both championed an active city government role in shaping Portland's

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<sup>6</sup> Urban historians have argued that reform gained popularity after World War II, as cities worried that their economies would return to pre-war stagnation. Common reform initiatives were public investment in projects such as public housing and urban renewal, and changes in city government structure to minimize corruption and promote long-term economic planning rather than short-term profit.

morality, perception by outsiders, and economic and political development. They presented gay bars as part of the crime and corruption permitted by conservative administrations and appropriate targets for city clean up campaigns.

Lee and Schrunk presented their actions against gay bars as civic betterment initiatives. Actions against gay bars helped legitimize reform administrations because many citizens claimed that suppressing gay bars improved the city's reputation. Crackdowns on gay bars also required less of non-queer citizens than sweeping structural changes in Portland's political and economic systems. Crackdowns on gay bars were not associated with higher taxes or decreased recreational or business opportunities for non-queers. Both Schrunk and Lee's initiatives against gay bars were linked to their broader economic and political reform goals. However, Lee's actions against gay bars were part of a more straightforward effort to suppress criminality in Portland, while Schrunk wanted to reshape the central city for economic development.

Lee and Schrunk adopted different frames in targeting gay bars. In the twentieth century, queerness was primarily defined as sin, crime, or illness. These models were interrelated, but gained particular currency at different times. Neither Lee nor Schrunk particularly emphasized queers' perceived sinfulness, although church groups who advocated this definition were an important component of Lee's supporters. Lee focused on the criminality of gay bars, associating them with other types of illegal activities, such as gambling and prostitution. Schrunk associated gay bars more strongly with medical models that defined sexual deviance as a kind of

illness. Lee's anti-criminality rhetoric and Schrunk's anti-sexual deviance explanations were quite similar to arguments used in other cities' crackdowns on gay bars, but occurred considerably later. For example, arguments for suppressing gay bars offered by politicians and newspapers in Miami in 1954 were similar to Schrunk's arguments in the early and mid-1960s. This suggests that Lee and Schrunk drew on existing anti-queer rhetoric rather than being prompted by newspapers' or citizens' anti-queer arguments. The mayors' utilization of, rather than acquiescence to, anti-queer arguments was also demonstrated by the inactivity of Peterson, a non-reform mayor, toward gay bars. Despite intense negative discussion of sexual deviance in local newspapers and the state legislature during his administration in the mid-1950s, Peterson did not try to suppress gay bars.

### **The Response of Portland's Police, Media, and OLCC to Mayors' Initiatives**

Groups who engaged in Portland's debates about gay bars and vice included the city council, police bureau, OLCC, Portland City Club, local newspapers, gay bar owners, and gay bar customers. Some groups adopted different positions on gay bars and vice during the time period, reflecting changes in goals and perceptions of Portland's queer community. For example, the police bureau abruptly switched positions on gay bars in 1964. The bureau had previously recommended positive council recommendations for gay bars' liquor license renewals, in order to monitor and contain Portland's queer community. However, in 1964, the bureau advocated closing all gay bars in order to combat an increasingly public queer presence in Portland. This change in position is discussed in chapter four.

The structure of Portland's government encouraged police officials to respond to mayors' directives rather than initiate anti-vice campaigns. The vice division reported to the deputy chief, supervised by the chief, who was responsible to the mayor. Mayors selected new police chiefs with each local election, dramatically altering and unsettling authority within the bureau. For example, in 1959, two ex-chiefs and three ex-deputy chiefs worked under the contemporary chief in Portland's police bureau.<sup>7</sup> Even between election years, police chiefs faced the constant possibility of being removed from their position. Both the Vollmer report and a 1959 study of Portland's city government by the Public Administrative Service of Chicago recommended removing the police bureau from direct mayoral supervision, in order to make the bureau less tied to electoral politics, but this was not implemented.<sup>8</sup>

Portland's media did not initiate city crackdowns on gay bars by forcing political action, as Fejes argues about Miami, but they were influential. Portland's newspapers promoted the connection of gay bars with sexual crimes and illness and supported mayors' anti-gay bar initiatives. Media coverage of council debates on gay bars adopted the same language and explanations of the need to suppress Portland's queer community as councilors utilized. Newspapers were particularly important, as Donnelly notes, because they were citizens' main source of information.<sup>9</sup>

OLCC limited reform administrations' anti-gay bar actions, despite the cooperation of OLCC agents with police officers in punishing public same-sex

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<sup>7</sup> Portland City Club, "Report on Law Enforcement in the City of Portland," *Portland City Club Bulletin* 45 (30 August 1968): 99, 125.

<sup>8</sup> Portland City Club, "Report on Law Enforcement," 98-99.



affection at gay bars. During Lee and Schrunk's administrations, OLCC reversed its general practice of supporting city decisions on liquor license renewals, and ignored negative city recommendations that were based on anti-vice initiatives rather than bars' individual records of violations. Formed after the repeal of Prohibition, OLCC decision-making balanced its mandates to both advance Oregon's economy and suppress immorality and crime. Arguments concerning minority groups' legal rights also influenced OLCC decisions during the 1964-65 debates. City councilors condemned OLCC for impeding their efforts, but did not follow through with further actions against gay bars.

### **Public Responses to Anti-Vice Actions and Reform**

Describing Portlanders' ambivalent responses to anti-vice initiatives, Donnelly laments, "cultural attitudes of free enterprise and aspirations for social purity can contribute to a contradictory and paradoxical public record... American approaches to crime and vice were ambivalent and confused and leave scholars with mixed conclusions to ponder."<sup>10</sup> Portland voters desired a moral city reputation, but generally elected conservative mayors who most often did not take action against vice or implement major reforms. Voters also often rejected reform measures on ballots.<sup>11</sup>

Cities' self-images and desired reputations influenced policies toward gay bars and vice. Fejes and Boyd argue that tourism and city reputations based on exotic differences encouraged tolerant city policies toward gay bars in Miami and San

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Donnelly, "Postwar Vice Crime and Political Corruption in Portland" (MA thesis, Portland State University, 1997), 17.

<sup>10</sup> Donnelly, "Postwar Vice Crime," 75.



Francisco. However, Boyd contends that San Francisco became less tolerant of gay bars when they were aimed at and dominated by queer customers rather than tourists.<sup>12</sup> Unlike San Francisco and Miami, Portland's gay bars did not attract tourists and the city did not take pride in exoticism or diversity, providing no economic or cultural incentive for tolerating gay bars. Schrank further argued that gay bars hurt the city economically by discouraging central city investment and visitors, because they were perceived as visible urban criminality.

Boyd also argues that San Francisco's reputation for vice and history as a "wide-open" town encouraged queer migration to the city.<sup>13</sup> San Francisco's status as a port city encouraged a transient and bachelor-oriented population base, which was more willing to break with social norms than average populations.<sup>14</sup> Portland grew more slowly and had a larger early population base of families. A journalist in 1868, for example, described Portland as "a puritanical city without intoxicating growth."<sup>15</sup> Like San Francisco, Portland historically tolerated vice, but did not embrace a reputation as wide open because of strong currents of conservatism and moralism. Portland's politicians and civic organizations often used the threat of being perceived as "wide open" to promote anti-vice initiatives. Gay bars, because they were labeled

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph Uris, "Trouble in River City: An Analysis of an Urban Vice Probe" (Ph.D. diss., Portland State University, 1981), 231.

<sup>12</sup> Nan Boyd, "'Homos Invade S.F.!': San Francisco's History as a Wide-Open Town," in *Creating a Place for Ourselves: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community Histories* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 79, 86.

<sup>13</sup> Boyd, "'Homos Invade S.F.!,'" 76.

<sup>14</sup> Boyd, "'Homos Invade S.F.!,'" 77.

<sup>15</sup> Gordon DeMarco, *A Short History of Portland* (San Francisco: Lexikos, 1990), 3.

disreputable and immoral, conflicted with Portland's identity as a moral and respectable city.

Portland's self-image and reputation were connected to race, sexuality, and class. Despite Portland's history of tolerating vice, white middle and upper-class citizens maintained respectable, conservative reputations by ascribing vice to other racial and class groups. For example, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, descriptions of vice in Chinatown and skid row served this function.<sup>16</sup> During World War II, local elites blamed increases in vice on African Americans and working-class Southerners. Lee and Schrunk continued the trend of absolving white middle and upper-class Portlanders during their anti-vice reforms by portraying gay bar customers as outsiders, particularly from California, rather than Portlanders.

Schrunk and Lee both tried to implement changes in Portland, despite public reluctance. By targeting gay bars, perceived as both cause and sign of the presence of immoral outsiders in Portland, they drew on myths that migrants threatened the city's upstanding traditions. Local historians Terence O'Donnell and Thomas Vaughn explain, "the vast majority in both the city and the state have never wanted outsiders in, and if they had to come they had better be 'the right sort.'"<sup>17</sup> During both crackdowns on gay bars, the city council portrayed itself as defending Portland's traditional moral decency against invading immoral groups, although Portland historically tolerated vice and gay bars. However, migrating groups were not

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<sup>16</sup> See Chris Sawyer's thesis on the history of Portland's skid row district. He includes a small section on the connections between Chinatown, skid row, and vice, particularly in pages 203-204 and 246.

<sup>17</sup> Terence O'Donnell and Thomas Vaughn, *Portland: A Historical Sketch and Guide* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1976), 24.

particularly targeted during anti-vice campaigns, and the mayors responsible for crackdowns advocated city growth and reform of racially exclusive laws. This suggests that reform mayors blamed outsiders to garner public support for their reforms rather than limit population or exclude people of color.

Local historians Donnelly and Uris take different positions on the relationship between citizens and vice in Portland. Donnelly contends that the public opposed vice, while Uris claims that the connection of vice with corrupt city government benefited Portlanders because it allowed citizens to both condemn and participate in vice goods and services. This thesis generally agrees with Uris's contention, a more complex cultural reading that supports my finding that citizens supported calls for vice suppression to improve the city's reputation, but withdrew their support if anti-vice initiatives limited their own entertainment or profit. Portlanders generally supported anti-vice actions directed at minority groups perceived to be immoral or outsiders, but opposed elimination of business and recreation opportunities, even if labeled vice, that they had come to expect from non-reform mayoral administrations. Non-queer citizens rarely voiced opposition to city actions against gay bars, but did not always extend their support to mayors' broader reform goals.

While Lee's anti-vice initiative clearly lacked popular support by the end of her administration, and neither mayor was able to change Portland's political system, Schrunk had more success in instituting economic reforms. The scope of vice targets, time period, and gender produced different public responses to Lee and Schrunk's anti-vice and reform goals. Both contemporary newspapers and historical accounts

presented Lee as an old-fashioned female reformer trying to ruin men's fun, while Schrunk was described as fair in his law enforcement. Lee's reforms affected all bar-goers, while Schrunk's campaign against gay bars was based explicitly on their queer clientele, rather than illegal actions taking place at the bars.

### **Changing Perceptions of Queerness and Legality**

National discussion of sexual deviance increased dramatically in newspapers, popular magazines, and legislatures between Lee and Schrunk's administrations. Psychiatric explanations grew in popularity and influence. Assumptions about the causes and nature of queerness changed, which influenced Schrunk and Lee's association of gay bars with different types of vice and the priority placed on suppressing them.

During the early 1950s, there were fewer popular discussions of queerness as a form of illness or constitutional protections. City and police officials labeled gay bars vice and Lee, therefore, included them in her anti-criminality initiatives. Many people in the early 1950s considered gay bar customers to be primarily distinguishable by violations of gender norms. Gender transgression was suppressed with crackdowns on drag shows, but was perceived as less threatening than subsequent medical models that also emphasized potential queer contagion and linked queers to violent sexual criminals. Unlike the 1960s, the city council during Lee's administration simply debated whether or not to close gay bars, rather than considering psychiatric theories or constitutionality to determine what was most effective. The council considered gay bars criminal rather than complex social problems.

Lee and Schrunck seized upon different signs of queers' transgression of boundaries. Although gender inversion was still important in discourse about queers during the 1960s, increasing discussion of psychiatric theories encouraged attention to other markers of deviant behavior. While Lee emphasized gender transgression, Schrunck pointed to expanding physical locations and public openness, reflecting different concerns about queers. Gay bars became a central rather than secondary vice target during Schrunck's administration. He linked gay bars to obscenity, sex crimes, and the degradation of Portland's downtown. However, multiple, contradictory theories about the nature of queerness and legality complicated council efforts to close gay bars in the 1960s.

Both advocates and opponents of closing gay bars during Schrunck's administration drew on theories that queerness was an illness. Psychiatric theories increased in number and influence, but coexisted with understandings of gay bars as criminal. The minutes of the 1964-65 council debates contained multiple definitions of queerness, but the definitions were not debated, possibly because lawyers, owners, police, and politicians shared conclusions that queer behavior, if not identity, was criminal and detrimental to the city. The legal status of gay bars, however, was unclear to participants in the council discussions and heavily debated. Although courts in California had recently issued decisions limiting city governments' right to close bars based only on queer clientele, and Supreme Court decisions during the period generally curtailed city and police powers, the question of gay bar customers' legal rights had been raised but not settled.

## Literature Review

Nancy Achilles, a mid-1960s sociologist, explains why studies of gay bars are important. She notes that analysis of gay bars offers insight about perception of queer communities because they were public, and therefore open to outsiders. They were also regular and important institutions in queer urban communities.<sup>18</sup> The work of Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis about Buffalo, New York offers extensive analysis of the importance and culture of gay bars.<sup>19</sup> Kennedy and Davis do not devote substantial attention to local government policies, but their ideas about the role of gay bars in queer community formation and culture can be applied to other U.S. cities, including Portland. They also explore some of the class and racial divisions of gay bars in Buffalo, which varied between cities. Race and class were important in Portland's gay bars, but receive insufficient attention in this thesis. Newspapers, historians, and officials' often veiled or absent discussions of race and class in Portland make it difficult to offer conclusive arguments about how city policy toward gay bars was influenced by these issues.

Historian Tom Cook is the main writer and researcher of gay bars in Portland. His short 1993 *Alternative Connection* article explores the role of bars in the formation of Portland's queer communities. He alludes to local government actions against gay bars, but offers little analysis of changes in city policy, politicians' motivations, or groups' responses. I generally agree with the information he presents, which is extremely well-researched, and his assertion that gay bars aided the formation of queer

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<sup>18</sup> Nancy Achilles, "The Homosexual Bar" (MA Diss., University of Chicago, 1964), 4.

communities in Portland. However, by focusing on city policies toward gay bars, I mainly address the perception and use of gay bars by politicians, newspapers, and citizens, rather than their role in forming queer communities and identities.

Documentation of Portland's queer history has been minimal. Histories of Portland address Lee's election campaign and initiatives against gambling and prostitution, but omit her efforts to close gay bars. Very little has been written about the administrations of Terry Schrunk or Fred Peterson. Although Portland and Oregon histories describe the city's general conservatism and hostility to change and outsiders, little has been written about responses to queer communities.

Joseph Uris and Robert Donnelly discuss anti-vice campaigns in Portland in the 1950s, but do not include gay bars, focusing instead on corruption, gambling, and prostitution. While Uris does not address the 1964-65 crackdown, this anti-sexual deviance initiative could support his contention that Portland's mid-1950s vice probe, concerning gambling and organized labor, greatly altered political and economic power in Portland. Uris argues that this vice scandal ended a period of control by traditional elites who ignored vice, and installed new elites who espoused middle-class virtues and conservative life styles.<sup>20</sup>

San Francisco's queer history is better documented. A major San Francisco crackdown on gay bars, generally dated from 1959 to 1962, is particularly relevant to Portland. Portland's city and police officials believed that San Francisco's policies toward gay bars directly influenced Portland by creating a flood of queer refugees to

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<sup>19</sup> See *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, by Kennedy and Davis.

Portland and by establishing, through precedent, what actions would be both legal and effective in limiting Portland's queer presence. Although Portland and San Francisco were different in many aspects, Nan Boyd's article contributes valuable ideas about the connections between gay bars and vice. Boyd writes that San Francisco's reputation as a "wide-open town" encouraged queer migration and the formation of queer political groups and identities. Portland politicians, organizations, and newspapers worried about the city's status as a wide-open town and its potential draw for queers. However, unlike San Francisco, Portland was not a "gay mecca," queer tourism was far less influential, the city had no economic or cultural interest in tolerating difference, and Portland's queer community was smaller.<sup>21</sup>

Articles by Estelle Freedman and Fred Fejes help explain concerns about sexual deviants in the 1950s.<sup>22</sup> Freedman explains how politicians, newspapers, and citizens connected queer communities to sexual psychopath scares across the United States. She also explores how concerns about gender and sexuality after World War II drove anti-sexual deviant rhetoric. Fejes' article shows how fears about sexual deviants resulted in a crackdown on Miami's gay bars. Although the timing, instigators of crackdowns, and political climates of Portland and Miami were different, analysis of Portland's 1964-65 crackdown reinforces Fejes' argument that increased discourse about sexual deviants and connections of queers with sexual psychopaths

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<sup>20</sup> Uris, "Trouble in River City."

<sup>21</sup> Boyd, "'Homos Invade S.F.!'"

<sup>22</sup> A number of articles by Freedman are relevant, but particularly "'Uncontrolled Desires:' The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960."



and sex crimes, particularly against children, supported local government actions against gay bars.

Miami's politicians claimed that they wanted to close gay bars and drive queers from the city. However, Fejes argues that the primary goal of Miami's crackdown was actually to reinforce the stigmatization of queerness. Portland citizen, police, and political complaints about increased queer public presence and "brazenness" during the 1960s, as well as expressed resignation to the inevitability of gay bars, support this argument. Fejes also argues that the change in Miami's policy toward queers from "discreet tolerance-official permissiveness and public silence" to "stigmatized tolerance-official permissiveness and public condemnation" was part of a larger campaign by Miami's civic and media leaders to "redefine the image of Miami as a major, respected urban center, free of the vice and flamboyance which characterized its short history."<sup>23</sup> Portland's leaders also did not want a city reputation as vice-ridden. However, because Portland was not historically known for flamboyance and diversity, reform mayors were able to portray vice suppression as a return to tradition rather than reform. They argued that vice and criminality, rather than an integral part of Portland's history, were a recent change brought particularly by migration. While of questionable accuracy, this was a more appealing explanation for Portland's citizens.

Roey Thorpe's article about lesbian bars in Detroit shows how bars altered layouts and locations to serve various needs, such as providing safety from non-queer

violence and curiosity. She argues that as Detroit's lesbian bars gained importance in queer social life they became more hidden and less known by non-queers. This seems inconsistent with the growing visibility of gay bars in Portland. I lacked sufficient information about Detroit to offer explanations for the comparative difference, but pursuing this question could be interesting.

John D'Emilio writes that the 1950s were the first period when queerness became a widely discussed public issue and that discussion increased further in the 1960s. Growing awareness of queer communities' presence drove anti-queer actions nationally and also encouraged perceptions of gays and lesbians as groups rather than isolated individuals. Increasing awareness of the existence of queer communities and gay rights groups, although Portland was not in the forefront of early gay rights work, influenced the 1964-65 debate about gay bars.

D'Emilio also describes a national Cold War context of anti-queer actions and rhetoric. He argues that "the consensus on homosexuality supplied a lethal weapon for unscrupulous individuals to wield with impunity."<sup>24</sup> Politicians employed negative definitions of queer communities for their own goals. However, this thesis differs from D'Emilio's work in describing how anti-queer rhetoric and actions were used as components of city government reform initiatives, rather than assaults on individual political or professional opponents. Reform mayors did not attack Portland's queer

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<sup>23</sup> Fred Fejes, "Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic: The 1954 Media Campaign Against Miami's Homosexuals and the Discourse of Civic Betterment," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9.3 (1999): 307.

<sup>24</sup> John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 47.

community to win elections, but instead to gain public and political support for their administrations' anti-vice and reform initiatives.

## **Chapter 2: Dorothy McCullough Lee's Anti-Criminality Reform**

Dorothy McCullough Lee pledged to clean up Portland in her 1948 campaign against incumbent mayor Earl Riley. Gay bars had faced little city government opposition or public attention during Riley's administration; city and police officials collected payoffs for ignoring vice locations.<sup>25</sup> Lee's election drew on initially strong public support for her condemnation of corruption and vice.

During her reform administration, Lee tried to suppress all criminality in Portland. Her primary target was gambling, but she also tried to close gay bars because they were considered criminal, although less threatening to the city than gambling. The city council debates about gay bars and subsequent media coverage emphasized nonconformance with gender norms, reflecting contemporary perceptions of what characteristics distinguished queers. Public rejection of the clean up campaign and lack of support from business interests, half of the city council, and OLCC ultimately limited Lee's attack on gay bars and criminality in Portland. Public, political, and business groups agreed that gay bars were undesirable, but rejected Lee's reforms when it became clear that she intended to suppress all vice in Portland, limiting recreational opportunities and business profits.

### **Population and Vice Increases During World War II**

Postwar advocates of reform drew on fears that Portland's rapid growth and failure to suppress vice during World War II had produced crime levels that threatened public safety and the city's reputation. Portland's population, image, and reputation

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<sup>25</sup> Both MacColl and Abbott discuss corruption in previous administrations.

changed dramatically during World War II. Shipbuilding-based growth in Portland “made this once comfortable and complacent city perhaps the most uncomfortable and least self-satisfied along the entire coast,” wrote *Fortune* magazine.<sup>26</sup>

Bars and vice operations increased in Portland during World War II. Military and shipyard workers added to the size of Portland’s customer base for bars. The median age of new shipyard employees was 30 and half were unmarried.<sup>27</sup> Shipyards operated 24 hours per day, increasing demand for entertainment at most times, despite OLCC regulations prohibiting service after 2:30 am.<sup>28</sup>

Most wartime migrants to Portland were from northern and western states, but local elites blamed African Americans and white Southerners for Portland’s wartime increases in vice and crime.<sup>29</sup> For example, urging that African American workers be housed on Portland’s outskirts, the President of the Central East Portland Community Club claimed, “If they are allowed to fan out through the city it soon will [sic] necessary to station a policeman on every corner.”<sup>30</sup> In response to arguments for racial exclusion, many African American defense workers were housed at Vanport, a public housing community far from the center of Portland. After the war, officials and newspapers encouraged defense workers to leave Portland. A 1946 *Oregonian* editorial, for example, encouraged Southern migrants to return to the South for the

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Amy Kesselman, *Fleeting Opportunities: Women Shipyard Workers in Portland and Vancouver during World War II and Reconversion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 95.

<sup>27</sup> Carl Abbott, *Portland: Planning, Politics, and Growth in a Twentieth-Century City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 129.

<sup>28</sup> *Oregonian*, *The Oregon Story 1850-2000* (Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing, 2000), 78.

<sup>29</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 128.

<sup>30</sup> Portland Bureau of Planning, “The History of Portland’s African American Community (1805 to the Present)” (Portland, February 1993), 64.

greater good of Portland.<sup>31</sup> Even the growth-oriented City Club lamented the “heavy impact on Portland and Oregon from the influx of a new transient population which came for jobs and cared little about the welfare of the town.”<sup>32</sup>

Police, politicians, and many citizens considered gay bars to be vice operations. Gay bars increased in urban areas throughout the nation during the war, serving men and women in the military and war-industry workers. Middle-class gender norms had previously impeded lesbian bars by discouraging white women’s bar attendance and public drinking. Women’s military service and defense-industry work facilitated bar attendance and transgression of pre-war gender norms. Columnist Max Lerner, for example, worried that with paid employment, women would “outdrink, outswear, and outswagger the men.”<sup>33</sup> As women made more money, wore pants, drank, and socialized without male escorts in larger numbers, lesbian bars became more viable.<sup>34</sup>

Vice and gay bars in Portland operated unchecked during World War II, aided by city and police corruption and Riley’s political philosophy that local government should not intervene in business affairs. Riley presented his non-interventionist administration as favoring business profits rather than regulating morality. However, in some cities, World War II brought vice crackdowns. Cities varied in blaming

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<sup>31</sup> Stuart McElderry, “Vanport Conspiracy Rumors and Social Relations in Portland, 1940-50,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 99.2 (1998): 153.

<sup>32</sup> Ellis Lucia, *The Conscience of a City: Fifty Years of City Club Service in Portland* (Portland: The City Club of Portland, 1966), 39.

<sup>33</sup> Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 161.

<sup>34</sup> Leila Rupp, *A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 149.

different racial or sexual minority groups for increases in vice, based partly on the groups' visibility. For example, the growth of queer communities was more dramatic in San Francisco than in Portland. Although San Francisco also saw large increases in people of color due to wartime jobs, concerns about immoral outsiders were aimed explicitly at queer migrants. The police and Armed Forces Disciplinary Board initiated crackdowns on gay bars to "rid the city of the unwholesome and offensive situation resulting from the recent influx of undesirables to San Francisco," in the words of the police.<sup>35</sup>

Lower than average pay and a poor pension system encouraged corruption in Portland's police department. Police salaries in San Francisco were almost twice salaries in Portland. Portland's corrupt city government also encouraged police officers to ignore vice or take bribes, according to historian Kimbark MacColl. "Mediocrity and indifference at the top produced equally mediocre and indifferent enforcement of the law, particularly in matters related to vice," he writes.<sup>36</sup> Vice control in Portland was decentralized. Each police precinct retained its own vice officers and supervising officers. This produced variations in enforcement practices in different parts of Portland and a lack of clear definition of responsibilities that facilitated corruption.

### **Gay Bars' Relation to Vice and Business Interests**

Government officials, police, and newspapers labeled gay bars criminal and immoral. Portland's gay bars "were considered a less than savory place to be," in

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<sup>35</sup> Boyd, "'Homos Invade S.F.!,'" 86.

customer Pat Ware's words.<sup>37</sup> The definition of gay bars as vice influenced their locations and public visibility. Gay bars often clustered in areas with high levels of other categories of crime and vice, such as prostitution, where they were less likely to draw public, city, and police hostility. Because queers could be arrested or harassed, gay bars were often somewhat hidden, lacking signs clearly advertising a queer clientele. Pat Ware, a Harbor Club customer, remembered "it said harbor in neon and it has a risque look to it. Like people wouldn't go into it unless you knew what kind of bar it was and that kind of thing. It was very dark and so forth."<sup>38</sup> The Rathskellar began as a nondescript bar in 1936, but gained a reputation as a queer meeting place with the patronage of soldiers during World War II. It was located in the basement of a former horse stable and was similarly described by the OLCC as a "dimly lit place."<sup>39</sup>

Bars often gained a queer clientele through both location and owners' attitudes. Generally gay bar owners did not identify as queer, but were willing to serve queer customers, although they often discouraged open expressions of identity or affection.<sup>40</sup> Bartenders were more likely to identify as queer and often drew a clientele that would follow them from one bar to others.<sup>41</sup> In many cities, organized crime groups owned and managed gay bars. Evidence suggests that this was not true in Portland.

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<sup>36</sup> E. Kimbark MacColl, *The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1915 to 1950* (Portland: The Georgian Press, 1979), 609.

<sup>37</sup> Pat Ware, interview by Ann Sherman, 19 November 1997, 4 December 1997, 10 December 1997, Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>38</sup> Ware, interview.

<sup>39</sup> Tom Cook, "Portland's Gay Bars and the Rise of a Community," <http://home.teleport.com/~glapn/ar04024.html>, 17 October 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Cook, "Portland's Gay Bars."

<sup>41</sup> Ric King, interview by Beka Smith, 3 June 2002, possession of Beka Smith.



Historians and contemporary citizens debated whether Portland's vice operators were established residents or directed by an external vice syndicate. There is substantial evidence of a long local history of vice and ownership of vice properties by prominent local businessmen. For example, Joe Schnitzer, a prominent bail bondsman closely connected with Portland's police bureau, owned the Saranac and Atlas Rooms, which were well known for prostitution. David Simpson, a real estate operator and Riley supporter, managed the Richelieu rooms, another non-queer prostitution location.<sup>42</sup> However, many of Portland's gay bar owners were less politically and economically powerful than long-established Portland elites like Simpson and Schnitzer. For example, Leonard Schneiderman, who owned the Music Hall, and Marijan Kokich, owner of the Rathskellar, were Eastern European immigrants. Portland's gay bar owners, lacking politically powerful connections, were not able to influence official city policy decisions, but customers and historians have alleged they, and other vice operations, bribed city and police officials to minimize scrutiny and harassment.<sup>43</sup>

Gay bars location and visibility varied widely in U.S. cities based partly on the intensity of city efforts and public desires to suppress them. San Francisco's queer and non-queer bohemian nightlife, according to Boyd, were not highly separated. For example, hotel magazines directed queer and non-queer tourists to Mona's, a lesbian bar in San Francisco, to see the spectacle of cross-dressing women.<sup>44</sup> However, in New York, like Portland, the boundaries between queer and non-queer establishments

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<sup>42</sup> MacColl, *The Growth of a City*, 609.

<sup>43</sup> Uris and MacColl describe vice operations' bribing of police and city officials generally, while Costa describes gay bars' payments.

<sup>44</sup> Boyd, "'Homos Invade S.F.!,'" 82.

were clearly drawn. Boyd credits the difference to San Francisco's cultural and economic investment in tolerating diversity, particularly exoticism, and the intense efforts of New York's State Liquor Authority to revoke gay bars' licenses, resulting in greater criminalization and marginalization of gay bars.<sup>45</sup> While OLCC was not more active in suppressing gay bars than most liquor control bodies, business and political leaders in Portland were less culturally and economically invested in tolerating gay bars.

### **Increasing Public Concerns about Vice in Portland**

A series of highly publicized reports drew public attention to vice in Portland and raised concerns about the city's reputation and safety. In response, city and police officials, newspapers, and civic organizations debated vice policy. Public perceptions that Riley's administration was corrupt and endangering the city's reputation and safety by condoning vice increased support for reform and anti-vice initiatives.

Military officials threatened to designate Portland off-limits during World War II because of rapidly escalating rates of venereal disease. The City Club, a growth and reform oriented organization, blamed the Riley administration's lack of enforcement against vice, particularly prostitution. The City Club noted that if local government did not take action, the May Act, which allowed the FBI to take control of law enforcement in cities with high rates of prostitution and vice, might be employed in

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<sup>45</sup> Boyd, "'Homos Invade S.F.!', " 84.

Portland. This would be “embarrassing to local pride and the loss of soldiers’ and sailors’ trade is hard on pocketbooks of local business men,” noted the City Club.<sup>46</sup>

Riley reluctantly agreed to increase anti-prostitution measures. However, Police Chief Harry Niles raised questions concerning the sincerity of the city’s commitment to vice control when he claimed that the police department’s policy was vice regulation through containment, isolation, and monitoring rather than eradication. Niles, and supporters, argued that it was better to tolerate prostitution in high-crime, low-income areas, because suppression efforts would only spread prostitutes to more respectable neighborhoods. The City Club, however, argued that the city needed to take an absolute stance against prostitution, in order to decrease potential for bribes and discourage vice operations generally.<sup>47</sup> The *Oregon Journal* supported the City Club report, but the *Oregonian* criticized the City Club for ruining the city’s reputation. While the *Oregonian* tried to blame the City Club rather than Riley’s administration, which it supported, both newspapers’ coverage of the issue enhanced citizens’ perceptions that the city was gaining a vice-tolerant reputation.<sup>48</sup>

Negative evaluations of Portland’s police bureau increased concerns that vice and corruption in the city were rampant and dangerous. The 1947 Vollmer report found that Portland’s crime rates were higher than cities of comparable size nationally and evaluated police efficiency as poor.<sup>49</sup> The report found Portland to be “flooded”

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<sup>46</sup> Portland City Club, “Portland’s Public Health Enemy Number One: A Study of Venereal Disease Control in the Portland Area,” *Portland City Club Bulletin* 25 (27 January 1945): 112.

<sup>47</sup> Portland City Club, Portland’s Public Health Enemy, 112.

<sup>48</sup> Lucia, *The Conscience of a City*, 40-58.

<sup>49</sup> August Vollmer, *Police Bureau Survey: City of Portland, Oregon. Portland Branch Bureau of Municipal Research and Service* (Eugene: University of Oregon, August 1947), vii, 35.

with punchboards, a type of illegal gambling, and chastised, “widespread vice in any locality is indicative of a lowered level of community ideals and morals.”<sup>50</sup> The report’s description of the city was unflattering. It noted, for example, that “drunken pedestrians are commonplace. Beggars or ‘moochers’ operate throughout the central part of the city. Businessmen report their doorways are constantly used at night as convenient toilets, receptacles for empty liquor bottles and for illicit sex purposes.”<sup>51</sup>

The City Club issued a 1948 report describing Portland as “wide open” to vice and corruption. Vice operations in Portland were “running so openly and notoriously and on such a scale in Portland that no police officer or public official competent enough to do his job at all could be unaware of the situation.”<sup>52</sup> Vice operations spent about 60,000 dollars each month in police and political payoffs, according to the report. In return, police and city officials warned vice operations before scheduled raids, allowing regular customers to leave before the police arrived. The City Club recommended a city-wide crackdown on all crime and abatement proceedings against vice properties. The report made the front pages of local newspapers, reportedly shocking most residents because they did not realize the extent of vice and corruption in Portland.<sup>53</sup>

### **Lee’s Reform Campaign**

Portlanders responded positively to Lee’s 1948 campaign for mayor, based on a platform of cleaning up the city, because they felt that the city’s reputation was

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<sup>50</sup> Vollmer, *Police Bureau Survey*, 23.

<sup>51</sup> Vollmer, *Police Bureau Survey*, 139.

<sup>52</sup> Portland City Club, “Law Enforcement in Portland and Multnomah County,” *Portland City Club Bulletin* 28 (20 February 1948): 134.

tarnished. Organizations and newspapers in postwar Portland complained that, while tolerable during wartime, unchecked vice was unacceptable for the city during peace.<sup>54</sup> Groups like the City Club backed Lee enthusiastically.<sup>55</sup> According to her husband, Scott Lee, the City Club member who met with her became “almost a zealot... this cancer had eaten into the nerve centers of respectable democratic government in their city.”<sup>56</sup>

“I will enforce the law,” was Lee’s campaign slogan. Lee did not label herself a reformer, but politicians, journalists, and citizens perceived her as a reform candidate. “I am not a reformer, as some persons define the word, but I believe strongly in the integrity of government,” explained Lee.<sup>57</sup> Gender and race influenced voters’ perception of Lee’s campaign, although she did not particularly emphasize her status as a white woman, discuss gender roles, or announce her commitment to women’s rights. As historian Katherine Moon notes, describing Oregon politician Nan Wood Honeyman, female politicians’ gender received intense scrutiny even when gender was not a central element in their campaigns or political agendas. Voters generally assumed that women would be interested in political areas that reflected their morality and concern for others.<sup>58</sup>

Cleaning up the city was often considered a white women’s issue. During the Progressive Era, many reformers had extolled the morality, purity, and selflessness of

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<sup>53</sup> Lucia, *The Conscience of a City*, 59.

<sup>54</sup> Portland City Club, “Portland’s Public Health Enemy,” 113.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Pitzer, “Dorothy McCullough Lee: The Successes and Failures of ‘Dottie-Do-Good,’” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 91.1 (1990): 13.

<sup>56</sup> MacColl, *The Growth of a City*, 648.

<sup>57</sup> Pitzer, “Dorothy McCullough Lee,” 5.

white womanhood in a variety of morality campaigns, such as urban reform, temperance, and anti-prostitution. While some activist groups run by women of color also utilized these ideals of womanhood, racist constructions of gender that questioned women of color's sexual purity made white women's public association with city morality crusades strongest.

Lee's status as a white woman enhanced public perception of her personal morality and distance from corruption and vice. Despite her credentials as a previous state legislator, public utilities commissioner, and founder of the first women-run law firm in Oregon, her morality and opposition to vice received almost exclusive coverage during her campaign. The *Oregon Voter*, for example, urged, "Mrs. Lee filed for mayor because there was no man of outstanding reputation would make the sacrifice... Vote for the courageous little woman!"<sup>59</sup> The publication was suggesting that Lee's entry into the traditionally male, and often morally dubious, field of city government was justified because men active in politics at the time were corrupt.

Nationally, advocates of reform argued that vice and corruption in local government impeded cities' growth and would lead to postwar recessions.<sup>60</sup> Portland, however, had "a halfway revolution," according to historian Carl Abbott.<sup>61</sup> Local government had been closely tied to business interests for several mayoral administrations. Some citizens, especially those benefiting from the inactivity and corruption that generally characterized Portland's government, opposed reform. Lee's

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<sup>58</sup> Moon, "Nan Wood Honeyman," 2.

<sup>59</sup> Pitzer, "Dorothy McCullough Lee," 14.

<sup>60</sup> Carl Abbott, *The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 121.

support was based in organizations dominated by Portland's growing middle-class, such as the City Club and women's groups. Longstanding wealthy residents, including business and government officials, supported Riley and opposed Lee. Riley kept taxes low, gave city business to supporters, and appointed powerful businessmen and real estate owners to city committees. For example, Riley ordered the formation of the Portland Area Postwar Development Committee, which included prominent realtors, executives, and business owners. The committee, later dissolved by Lee, controlled many local issues. "These men literally ran the city of Portland," according to MacColl.<sup>62</sup>

Demonstrating public rejection of Riley's tolerance of vice and corruption, Lee won 70 percent of the vote in 1948 and took office in 1949. She promised to enforce laws against vice as much "as is humanly possible" and reform Portland's government structure, in order to minimize vice and corruption by increasing the accountability and visibility of politicians' actions. She advocated a shift from city council governance to the city manager system. City council, or commission, government was a reform target because its lack of comprehensive supervisory measures facilitated corruption and, in Abbott's words, "promoted grandstanding and horsetrading to protect short-term political interests."<sup>63</sup> She also promised to adjust Portland's economic structures to facilitate growth, which she presented as a solution to the city's

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<sup>61</sup> Abbott, *The New Urban America*, 122.

<sup>62</sup> MacColl, *The Growth of a City*, 585-6.

<sup>63</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 164.



budget deficit and rising unemployment.<sup>64</sup> However, Portland's residents seemed to value pledges of anti-vice actions more than city growth and local government spending and reform. Voters demonstrated resistance to city growth and increased local government activity by rejecting civil service reforms, bonds for the zoo and basic city operating expenses, and construction of public housing.<sup>65</sup>

### **Lee's Crackdown on Vice**

Lee was nicknamed "No sin" Lee, emphasizing her aversion to and lack of immorality. "Keeping the city as wholesome as possible," she noted, was her plan.<sup>66</sup> Her stance on vice was absolute. "The difficulty is, that you can't be a little bit illegal- any more than you can be a little bit dead. You are either law-abiding- or you aren't," she explained.<sup>67</sup> This uncompromising definition of criminality led to her inclusion of multiple, and unpopular, targets in her anti-vice crackdown.

Lee instructed the police bureau to implement a continuous policy of vice eradication, rather than the irregular sweeps that the department had employed previously. She appointed Charles Pray as police chief and symbolically cut the direct phone line between city hall and the chief's desk, illustrating the police bureau's greater independence from political control.<sup>68</sup> Pray reorganized the police force and increased arrests. "All ex-vice squad members were ordered to dig their uniforms out

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<sup>64</sup> Dorothy Lee, "Today's Guest Editorial: Portland, 1949," *Oregon Journal*, 31 December 1948, Dorothy McCullough Lee biography file, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>65</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 157-8.

<sup>66</sup> Jack Roberts, "There's Too Much Apathy, Says Lee," *Oregon Journal*, 19 December 1951, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ladies Home Journal, "When a Woman Runs the Town," *Ladies Home Journal* 69 (January 1952): 49.

<sup>68</sup> Pitzer, "Dorothy McCullough Lee," 16.



of mothballs,” reported the *Oregonian*.<sup>69</sup> Pray altered vice squads’ chain of command, giving authority to Assistant Chief Paul Shreve rather than precinct captains.

At Lee’s direction, and over the objections of business leaders, police officers raided after-hours nightclubs and bars and padlocked vice operations throughout the city. Lee included gambling, prostitution, and gay bars as vice operations, but directed most police, political, and media attention toward gambling. Police particularly targeted pinball machines and punchboards, forms of gambling that were ubiquitous and illegal.<sup>70</sup> Opposition to Lee’s anti-vice initiative increased as police raids on gambling included prominent private clubs, such as the Multnomah Athletic Club, the Press Club, and the American Legion. The Press Club, for example, lost 50,000 dollars in annual income from slot machines.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to ordering police action against bars violating laws or OLCC rules, Lee tried to close gay bars through police and council actions, despite the absence of specific laws prohibiting bars with queer customers. She warned, “As for any deviation or fringe stuff, I am not going to have anything to do with it.”<sup>72</sup> Lee “hated us,” recalled gay bar customer Norm Costa. “She didn’t want people to drink, she didn’t want them to have sex. She didn’t want them to do anything.”<sup>73</sup> Lee included gay bars as a secondary target in her campaign against vice because she perceived them as criminal and immoral. Crackdowns on gay bars throughout the U.S. were

<sup>69</sup> *Oregonian*, “New Chief Abolishes Vice Squad,” *Oregonian*, 8 January 1949, p 4.

<sup>70</sup> Donnelly, “Postwar Vice Crime,” 30.

<sup>71</sup> *Ladies Home Journal*, “When a Woman Runs the Town,” 49.

<sup>72</sup> *Oregonian*, “Mayor Raps ‘Fringe Stuff’: ‘Loosening’ Rapped of Liquor Laws,” *Oregonian*, 5 June 1951, section 3, p 4.

motivated by different factors, including electoral gain, deflecting attention from corruption, and highly publicized sex crimes.<sup>74</sup> Lee's increased action against gay bars were part of her reformist attack on vice throughout the city, rather than a direct manipulation of elections or distraction from scandal.

Gay bars during Lee's administration included the Harbor Club, Music Hall, Back Stage, and Rathskellar Beer Parlor. A lesbian clientele gathered at the Buick Cafe, while a mixed crowd went to the Back Stage and Music Hall.<sup>75</sup> The Harbor Club, like many gay bars, had a customer base of various sexual orientations during the day, but was almost entirely queer and predominantly male between 1 and 2:30 a.m. Queer customers often built long lines outside of the Harbor Club after taverns licensed only until 1 a.m. closed.<sup>76</sup>

Lee temporarily closed the Rathskellar in 1949. The Rathskellar had a series of OLCC violations before Lee ordered its closure, including sales to minors, serving very intoxicated people, poor sanitation, and disorderly premises, but had previously only received warnings and suspensions. Owner Marijan Kokich quickly re-opened the tavern as Club Rhumba, but was again closed temporarily by the city for serving queer clients in 1951.<sup>77</sup> OLCC then issued a warning to Club Rhumba for "lewd and disorderly premises," and suspended its liquor license less than a month later. Shortly

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<sup>73</sup> Norm Costa, interview by Ruben Reynaga and Stephanie Munley, 13 November 2000, Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>74</sup> D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 49-50.

<sup>75</sup> Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, "A Guide to Portland's Historic Gay and Lesbian Sites of Interest."

<sup>76</sup> Duane Frye, "Portland Gay Bars in the '50s and '60s," 1998 Gay Pride Official Commemorative Program, 20-21 June 1998, 19.

<sup>77</sup> Cook, "Portland's Gay Bars."

after the last OLCC violation, Kokich's lease was cancelled and he surrendered his license.<sup>78</sup>

Nationally, police most often targeted gay men in bars and parks, and women in and around bars. Portland's gay bars, during non-reform periods such as Riley's administration, were safer from arrests than parks, possibly due to bribery and somewhat less public locations. The lack of police action during Riley's administration can be seen in two police officers' request for instructions concerning lesbians at the Music Hall. "We know nothing of how to handle this situation and have taken no action," they reported to Assistant Police Chief Paul Shreve.<sup>79</sup> When Portland's police made arrests, they usually charged queers with disorderly conduct involving morals, which could be prosecuted with only the statements of a vice officer.<sup>80</sup> Portland's police code defined disorderly conduct broadly, giving considerable power to police officers to arrest individuals if they chose. It was unlawful for any person to cause public inconvenience, annoyance, alarm, or risk, by fighting, making threats, noise, or "coarse utterance, gesture or display."<sup>81</sup>

### **Constraints on Lee's Anti-Gay Bar Initiative**

Lee successfully directed the police to enforce existing laws against gay bars such as the Rathskellar because she controlled the police department as Portland's mayor. However, the political composition of the city council limited her ability to

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<sup>78</sup> Oregon Liquor Control Commission, Applicant Record: Marijan Kokich, Oregon Liquor Control Commission, Portland.

<sup>79</sup> Pete Clark and Roland Crites, to Assistant Police Chief Paul Shreve, 8 February 1949, City Council Minutes Attachments, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

<sup>80</sup> Tom Cook, "The History of Oregon's Sodomy Laws and Repressive Legislation," <http://home.teleport.com/~glapn/ar04001.html>, 17 October 2001.

pass new legislation targeting gay bars or implementing reforms generally. Initially, Ormond Bean was Lee's only council ally and he did not vote consistently in support of Lee's reform measures. She was regularly opposed by the other councilors, William Bowes, Fred Peterson, and Kenneth Cooper. For example, Lee and Bean voted to submit a charter for city manager government to referendum, but were defeated by the other three councilors.

In 1950, Jake Bennett was elected to replace Cooper. A prohibitionist and fundamentalist, he was extremely supportive of Lee's anti-vice efforts, especially concerning bars. He warned, "Prohibition is coming back – or chaos."<sup>82</sup> With Bennett's enthusiastic support and Bean's sporadic vote, Lee had greater success in more extensive actions against bars and vice.<sup>83</sup>

Oregon law limited the ability of Lee and the city council to close gay bars, despite political, police, and citizen group consensus that gay bars were criminal and immoral. OLCC regulations did not specifically prohibit queer customers, and the state legislature relaxed rather than increased liquor regulations during Lee's administration. Oregon was a "monopoly" liquor state, which required that state-appointed OLCC officials regulate all liquor sales and consumption. OLCC had its own enforcement team, with authority to make arrests and enter buildings without warrants, but also depended on the efforts of state and local police bureaus in detecting violations of OLCC regulations. The responsibility of Portland police, according to their code book, was to notify OLCC "of any acts, practices, or other conduct of any

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<sup>81</sup> City of Portland, *Police Code of the City of Portland, Oregon* (1960), 16-601.

licensee hereunder which may be subversive of the general welfare or contrary to the spirit of this article, and to recommend such action of the part of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission as will remove the evil.”<sup>84</sup>

While police and politicians could temporarily close a bar for criminal violations, OLCC was responsible for permanent revocations of licenses. Businesses serving and selling alcohol were required to renew their licenses each year. Renewal applications were reviewed by the city council. The council sent favorable or negative evaluations to the OLCC, which made the final decision of whether or not to permit bars’ continued operations. Licenses could be renewed without favorable city recommendations. OLCC grounds for refusing license renewals were less extensive than original application guidelines. Licenses could be cancelled or suspended because of noisy, lewd, disorderly, or insanitary conditions.<sup>85</sup>

OLCC’s basic statutory provisions included welfare, health, morals, and promoting temperance, which legitimized OLCC support for city council recommendations to close gay bars and other drinking establishments with vice activities.<sup>86</sup> OLCC most often followed the recommendations of local government bodies concerning license renewals, but revocations were fairly rare. In 1949, for example, only 28 licenses out of all the liquor establishments in Oregon were

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<sup>82</sup> Larry Smyth, “Liquor Body Says Licenses ‘Up to City,’” *Oregon Journal*, 19 December 1951, 4.

<sup>83</sup> Pitzer, 27.

<sup>84</sup> City of Portland, *Police Code*, 16-2612.

<sup>85</sup> Oregon Liquor Control Commission, *Liquor Control Laws and Regulations: State of Oregon* (Salem, Oregon: 1951), 18-19.

<sup>86</sup> Alcoholic Beverage Control, *An Official Study by the Joint Committee of the States to Study Alcoholic Beverage Laws* (1950), 69.

revoked.<sup>87</sup> However, in 1950, Lee reported that OLCC supported more council input on the “propriety” of applicants, and “not just rubber stamps.”<sup>88</sup>

### City Council Debates on Gay Bars

In 1950, the Music Hall’s renewal application drew OLCC and council scrutiny. The Music Hall was a popular Portland drag club, offering nightly live acts.<sup>89</sup> As Joan Scott points out, the prevalent depiction of queers in the 1950s as “isolated perverts” did not negate the existence of large gathering locations that were not well-known by non-queer people.<sup>90</sup> Both the Music Hall and Backstage, connected to the back of the Music Hall, were usually “jammed with customers,” remembered customer Duane Frye.<sup>91</sup> While the Hall probably also drew curious non-queers, queer customers in Portland were more aware of the Music Hall than non-queer politicians and citizens. Writer William Holman explains that the Music Hall and Backstage were “widely known to ‘that percentage in the know.’”<sup>92</sup> The meaning of “in the know” depends on context, since gay bars and drag shows nationally drew both queer and non-queer customers. For example, a tourist guide called *Where to Sin in San Francisco* listed Finocchio’s, a drag club aimed at non-queer customers. It described Finocchio’s as a place where “guys and their gals in the know sit at least three tables from ringside and let themselves be sucked in by insidious illusion.”<sup>93</sup> Similarly, in Miami, drag shows drew tourists and were a popular component of the

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<sup>87</sup> Alcoholic Beverage Control, *An Official Study*, 127.

<sup>88</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 16 March 1950, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

<sup>89</sup> Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, “A Guide.”

<sup>90</sup> Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” 397.

<sup>91</sup> Frye, “Portland Gay Bars,” 11.

<sup>92</sup> Holman, “A Gay History,” 3.

city's nightlife.<sup>94</sup> However, considering the context of Holman's article as a remembrance of Portland's queer community, Portland's lack of queer tourism and staid nightlife, and city councilors' professions of shock upon discovering its existence, it seems likely that the Music Hall was more targeted toward the queer community rather than non-queer audiences interested in spectacle.

According to historian Tom Cook and Music Hall customers, council efforts to close the Music Hall began when councilors went to see the Mills Brothers, a mainstream music act, at the Music Hall in 1950 and were "appalled" by an opening drag act.<sup>95</sup> However, the police had issued earlier reports on lesbians at the Music Hall. The women's protective division responded to complaints about "the suggestive and disgusting nature of entertainment at the Music Hall" in 1949. Division supervisors instructed female officers, escorted by a male officer, to verify reports that lesbians "were operating" at the Music Hall and Buick Cafe "in the attempt to pick up women and make lovers of them."<sup>96</sup> The officers reported that they successfully observed lesbians and lewd behavior. They gave detailed reports on entertainment at the Music Hall, highlighting cross-dressing and "a smutty line of patter" in songs and introductions.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Boyd, "'Homos Invade S.F.!','" 83.

<sup>94</sup> Fejes, "Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic," 314.

<sup>95</sup> Pat Young, "The Untouchables: The Burnside Triangle has a Long History of Controversy," *Just Out*, 3 August 2001, 13.

<sup>96</sup> Elizabeth Moorad, to Chief Pray, 14 February 1950, City Council Minutes Attachments, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

<sup>97</sup> Portland Police Bureau, Vice Squad Report, 9, 11, 17 February 1949, City Council Minutes Attachments, Stanley Parr Archives, Portland.



Although the Music Hall had operated since 1937 without comment from OLCC or the city council, the council debated owner Leonard Schneiderman's request for a 1950 liquor license renewal at length. Schneiderman operated the Music Hall, Zebra Room, and Back Stage under one liquor license. He was first cited by the OLCC in January 1950, for unsatisfactory provision of meals. OLCC then rejected his 1950 renewal application based on unsatisfactory past operations, inadequate food, and it failing to be "in the best interests of the public" to permit a single license for all three of his establishments.<sup>98</sup> Schneiderman applied for a hearing and OLCC agreed to consider an application for the Music Hall alone, provided that the city council gave him a favorable endorsement. OLCC also required that Schneiderman prohibit "lewd and indecent entertainment," particularly male and female impersonation. Historian George Chauncey argues that liquor license requirements that gay bars be "orderly" were highly influential in efforts to close gay bars. In New York, the state liquor authority considered the simple presence of queer customers disorderly.<sup>99</sup> OLCC seemed to uphold this interpretation by including discouragement of queer customers as a requirement for the Music Hall's license renewal.

Evaluating Schneiderman's request, city councilors criticized female impersonation acts and the Music Hall's queer clientele. "The reports on this place have been pretty bad," Lee commented, describing the Music Hall's audience.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Oregon Liquor Control Commission, to Leonard Schneiderman, 30 January 1950, City Council Minutes Attachments, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

<sup>99</sup> Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 337.

<sup>100</sup> Oregon Journal, "Council Takes Rap at Impersonators," *Oregon Journal*, 17 March 1950, 1.



Bean cited police reports as proof the Music Hall “had been a place undesirable.”<sup>101</sup>

Schneiderman promised that impersonation would no longer be permitted at the Music Hall. The council made renewal of his license contingent on prohibiting future impersonation and lewd entertainment, serving more food, and discouraging queer patrons.

Cold War ideology emphasized rigid gender roles and nuclear families as a prerequisite for national security and superiority. People assumed that women and men should marry, have children, and dress, behave, and entertain themselves in gender-specific roles. These ideas did not, for example, encourage city council members to perceive drag performances in Portland positively. Nonconformance with gender norms at gay bars was highly emphasized in newspaper coverage, city councilor’s arguments, and police reports. For example, a vice squad report on the Music Hall noted that the Master of Ceremonies appeared male, but was not, and pointedly referred to the entertainer as “mistress of ceremonies” in its subsequent reports.<sup>102</sup>

Concern about nonconformance with gender norms included depictions of aggressive female sexual behavior. Both Estelle Freedman and Donna Penn argue that increasing attributions of aggression to lesbians after World War II served to construct boundaries around appropriate expressions of white female sexuality and gender, issues of great concern during the Cold War and after World War II’s disruption of

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<sup>101</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 16 March 1950.

<sup>102</sup> Portland Police Bureau, Vice Squad Report.

gender norms.<sup>103</sup> Portland police reports on lesbians highly emphasized aggressive sexual behavior. Lesbians, according to a police report, roved the Music Hall in search of lovers, moving on to the Buick to “look for other prospects,” if they were not successful at the Hall.<sup>104</sup> Officers of the women’s protective division demonstrated assumptions that lesbians were highly sexually aggressive when they noted that the officers were disappointed that they were not “accosted” by lesbians at the Music Hall during their investigative visit.<sup>105</sup> The women’s protective division was also particularly concerned by a complaint from a woman alleging that a male impersonator at the Music Hall encouraged “her to meet her (?).” The entertainer, according to the report, continued to telephone until the complainant relented and met the entertainer “who made passionate love to her; that she was a hermaphrodite and intended to undergo an operation to make her male.”<sup>106</sup> Lack of clearly defined gender and female aggression in this reported incident alarmed the division.

Gender nonconformance also dominated newspaper coverage of the council’s debate on gay bars. The *Oregon Journal* printed a front-page photograph of both male and female impersonators captioned “not in Portland, Boys.” The newspaper summarized council recommendations concerning the Music Hall as “swishy stuff shan’t sully city says mayor.”<sup>107</sup> Miami newspapers took a similarly light tone in reporting on gender transgression. Fejes argues that descriptions of gay bar customers

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<sup>103</sup> Donna Penn, “The Sexualized Woman: The Lesbian, the Prostitute, and the Containment of Female Sexuality in Postwar America,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 362.

<sup>104</sup> Clark and Crites, to Assistant Police Chief.

<sup>105</sup> Moorad, to Chief Pray.

<sup>106</sup> Moorad, to Chief Pray.

as gender inverters, although not respectful, were perceived as less threatening than later understandings that emphasized sick and violent gay bar customers.<sup>108</sup> In Portland, neither local newspaper covered city actions against non-drag gay bars, such as the Rathskellar. This suggests that, while considering gay bars generally immoral and criminal, journalists and citizens particularly noticed transgression of gender norms at gay bars in the 1950s.

Arguments that outsiders brought immorality into Portland influenced the council's discussions of gay bars and drinking establishments generally. A police report on lesbian customers of the Music Hall claimed that they were driven from San Francisco because of their actions as "confirmed lesbians."<sup>109</sup> Lee also claimed that the Music Hall's entertainers had been thrown out of San Francisco, three years earlier.<sup>110</sup> "San Francisco has been pretty well closed to the type of people who have been frequenting this place, and we don't want them here either," Lee explained.<sup>111</sup> She may have been referring to a punitive anti-gay bar campaign by San Francisco's police and Alcoholic Beverage Commission (ABC). This campaign was a reaction to a series of San Francisco court cases restricting city and police actions against gay bars as long as customers committed no illegal or indecent acts.<sup>112</sup> Portlanders' ascription of immorality to outsiders was also demonstrated by a proposed state regulation of liquor advertisements originating outside of Oregon. The state Woman's

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<sup>107</sup> Oregon Journal, "Council Takes Rap," 1.

<sup>108</sup> Fejes, "Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic," 317.

<sup>109</sup> Clark and Crites, to Assistant Police Chief.

<sup>110</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 16 March 1950.

<sup>111</sup> Oregon Journal, "Council Takes Rap," 1.

Christian Temperance Union, Temperance League of Oregon, and the Oregon Council of Churches promoted the regulation as protecting Oregon's youth from seductive, out of state liquor advertisers. If it had passed, it would have been the only state regulation of its kind.<sup>113</sup>

### **Expanding Anti-Vice Targets and Public Backlash**

The council discussion of the Music Hall led directly to council consideration of increased regulation of all bars in Portland. Pointing to the councils' just completed decision concerning the Music Hall as a sign that gay bars and bars generally were increasing in Portland, Lee asked, "What I want to know is just who if anyone is determined when we reach the saturation point on this sort of thing."<sup>114</sup> She argued that growing numbers of both gay bars and non-queer drinking establishments were overwhelming the city. Lee felt that the established procedure for reviewing liquor licenses gave the council inadequate control to address the perceived problem.<sup>115</sup> State law required that the city council evaluate each application based on its own merit, rather than regulate the total number of operating taverns.

Lee and Bennett blamed Portland's immorality and crime on the city's "saturation" with liquor. The idea of saturation incorporated beliefs that migrating outsiders brought more immorality to Portland than the city could handle safely and reputably. Bennett claimed that there were so many drinking establishments in

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<sup>112</sup> Susan Stryker and Jim Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay: A History of Queer Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996), 30.

<sup>113</sup> Portland City Club, "Report on the Bill Making Sale of Promotively Advertised Alcoholic Beverage Unlawful," *Portland City Club Bulletin* 31 (20 October 1950): 102.

<sup>114</sup> Oregon Journal, "Council Takes Rap," 4.

<sup>115</sup> Oregon Journal, "Council Takes Rap," 4.

Portland “it isn’t safe to walk along the streets.”<sup>116</sup> He also argued that the large numbers of licensed businesses made it impossible for bars to compete without enticing customers with vice activities.<sup>117</sup> This argument was not completely ungrounded. According to bar owner and later mayor Bud Clark, stiff competition combined with Lee’s anti-gambling initiative forced many taverns out of business. Taverns often could not survive on beer sales, generally priced between five and fifteen cents per beer throughout the 1950s, without the substantial income derived from gambling.<sup>118</sup> The issue of bar control in Portland was somewhat partisan, with Republicans, such as Lee, advocating creation of new laws and Democrats urging stricter enforcement of existing laws. The council, however, agreed to require a no-gambling pledge for all liquor license applications and renewals.

Bennett and Lee further attempted to address saturation, but with few quantifiable successes. Describing the increase in liquor license applicants as a “veritable avalanche,” Lee appointed a council committee to determine the point of saturation.<sup>119</sup> Bennett also began a campaign against OLCC, alleging corruption. He claimed that the “right type of personnel” was not operating bars.<sup>120</sup> Bennett may have been criticizing bar owners, such as Schneiderman and Kokich, who were more easily condemned as disreputable because they lacked ties to long-established politically and economically powerful families in the city. Bennett may also have

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<sup>116</sup> Oregon Journal, “Council Slaps Liquor Body, Orders Survey,” *Oregon Journal*, 17 March 1950, 1.

<sup>117</sup> Smyth, “Liquor Body,” 1.

<sup>118</sup> Bud Clark, “Taverns in My Life,” in *History by the Glass: Portland’s Past and Present Saloons, Bars and Taverns* (Portland: Bianco Publishing, 1996), 5.

<sup>119</sup> Oregon Journal, “Council Slaps Liquor Body,” 2.

<sup>120</sup> Smyth, “Liquor Body,” 1.

been referring to employment of queer bartenders. Gay bar customer and owner Ric King recalled that many queer bartenders worked at gay bars.<sup>121</sup>

The public, while generally not in favor of gay bars' rights, did not respond positively to the council's campaign to limit all of Portland's bars. Many Portland residents were concerned about outsiders' potential for increasing crime and corruption in the city and desired a good city reputation, but did not want to renounce leisure vice activities that were perceived as normal and unthreatening. In the *Ladies Home Journal's* estimation, Lee's election was a "popular mandate for reform" but many voters were shocked when "she was so thorough."<sup>122</sup> They did not object to the targeting of gay bars and prostitution, but did not favor anti-vice initiatives that affected more people, like the total number of bars in Portland and small-scale gambling. According to an *Oregon Journal* survey, Portlanders believed that Lee was harassing minor offenders, rather than more serious and external vice operators.<sup>123</sup>

The media attacked Lee's personal appearance and anti-vice efforts, dismissing her campaign against immorality and corruption as old-fashioned female prudery. Describing derisive newspaper coverage, Lee's husband recalled a "campaign of sniping" to make Lee's efforts look ridiculous.<sup>124</sup> A series of articles, for example, criticized her choice of hats. As Katherine Moon notes, emphasizing femininity could damage female politicians' public images because legitimate authority was connected

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<sup>121</sup> King, interview.

<sup>122</sup> *Ladies Home Journal*, "When a Woman Runs the Town," 49.

<sup>123</sup> Pitzer, "Dorothy McCullough Lee," 27-28.

<sup>124</sup> Scott Lee, "Untitled Biography of Dorothy McCullough Lee," unnumbered, Dorothy McCullough Lee Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

with male traits.<sup>125</sup> Emphasizing Lee's female attire instead of her political actions weakened her credibility. Bars' historic orientation toward male recreation also made Lee's anti-bar initiatives appear as an assault on traditional male prerogatives.

Facing public and media hostility to anti-vice initiatives, Bean distanced himself from Bennett and Lee's anti-bar campaign. Without Bean's support, Lee and Bennett lacked sufficient council votes to pass new measures. Although enforcement of existing laws continued, the council did not draft new anti-vice laws.<sup>126</sup>

### **Decline of Lee's Reform and Return to Inactivity Concerning Gay Bars**

By the summer of 1950, the council faced a backlog of liquor license requests created by the council's stricter attention to and requirements of bars. The council approved most applications and renewals, due to council time considerations and negative public feedback, and streamlined the evaluation process for establishments with no recorded violations or changes in ownership. Bennett complained, unsuccessfully, that this would lead to more criminality.<sup>127</sup> However, because he and Lee lacked allies, the council's drive against saturation and vice operations, including gay bars, continued to lose momentum.

OLCC further damaged Lee's anti-vice campaign in 1951, when it criticized the non-gambling pledge as legally dubious and announced that it would not refuse liquor licenses based on the pledge alone. Lee conceded that OLCC's stance was legally permissible, but argued that it was the council's moral duty to make negative recommendations. Supported by Bennett and Bean, and opposed by Bowes and

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<sup>125</sup> Moon, "Nan Wood Honeyman," 3.

Peterson, she insisted that the council had to “sweep out its own yard” and issue negative city evaluations to bars with vice operations.<sup>128</sup> OLCC licensed approximately 150 establishments that the city had given negative evaluations.<sup>129</sup>

With the ebbing of Lee’s general anti-vice campaign, due to lack of political, public, and OLCC support, the council began to return to its previous policy of ignoring gay bars. This illustrated councilors’ definition of gay bars as undesirable but not essentially threatening the city. For example, the city council had no questions for Johnnie Honegger, owner of the Harbor Club, in 1952 and voted unanimously in favor of his liquor license renewal. The council’s unanimous approval of the renewal requests of Olga Polechrones and Roy Cope also demonstrated the return of council inattention to gay bars. Polechrones’ Model Inn and Cope’s Old Glory were later targeted as “homosexual hangouts” in the 1964-65 city crackdown.

Anti-vice advocates were fairly unpopular by Portland’s 1952 elections. Police Chief Pray had resigned in frustration in 1951.<sup>130</sup> Bennett was recalled in 1952 and replaced with Nathan Boody, an ex-businessman who did not align with either group in the council. Lee promised to continue her efforts for impartial law enforcement, industrial expansion, and city manager government if re-elected. She reminded voters

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<sup>126</sup> *Oregonian*, “Portland’s Mayor-Elect Silent on Plans, Program,” *Oregonian*, 9 January 1952, 38.

<sup>127</sup> *Oregon Journal*, “Council Passes New Liquor License System,” *Oregon Journal*, 4 January 1951, 4.

<sup>128</sup> *Oregonian*, “City to Defy OLCC Stand on Pledges,” *Oregonian*, 12 December 1951, 1.

<sup>129</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 28 February 1952, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

<sup>130</sup> Pitzer, “Dorothy McCullough Lee,” 16, 29.



of the need for “civic decency.”<sup>131</sup> Women’s clubs, church and veteran groups, and the Chamber of Commerce supported her.<sup>132</sup>

Lee’s failure to gain the support of prominent, long-established business and political leaders added to her lack of popularity. According to historian Robert Donnelly, her campaign against vice also conflicted with social ideals of free enterprise.<sup>133</sup> This, in addition to concerns about legality, may have been the root of her conflict with OLCC. When making decisions on licenses, OLCC balanced its mission to protect “the safety, welfare, health, peace and morals of the people of the state,” and its mandate “to encourage the development of all Oregon industry.”<sup>134</sup> Liquor control bodies throughout the nation gave different levels of priority to facilitating business or suppressing criminality. For example, until the formation of California’s ABC, San Francisco’s gay bars were licensed by the State Board of Equalization, a fiscal organization that valued tax revenue over suppression of queer communities.<sup>135</sup> Promoting Oregon’s economy affected OLCC decisions concerning gay bars less than in San Francisco, because the state drew less income from Portland’s gay bars. However, business leaders were concerned about Portland’s sedate nightlife and did not advocate complete suppression of vice and bars. This was demonstrated when proponents of a liquor dispensation bill claimed that the bill’s easing of liquor restrictions would lend “a degree of sophistication to Oregon urban

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<sup>131</sup> Ron Moxness, “Mayor Lee Asks Re-election Votes to Finish Work,” *Oregonian*, 16 February 1952, 1.

<sup>132</sup> Ladies Home Journal, “When a Woman Runs the Town,” 105.

<sup>133</sup> Donnelly, “Postwar Vice Crime,” ii-iii.

<sup>134</sup> Oregon Liquor Control Commission, *Liquor Control Laws and Regulations: State of Oregon* (Portland, 1964), 7.

life which we do not now have. This would make the state much more attractive to tourists and businessmen entertaining out-of-town guests.”<sup>136</sup>

Despite the initial popularity of her anti-criminality platform, Lee was attacked as an old-fashioned moralizer by the end of her term. According to Oregon governor Tom McCall, “She sanitized the city, and she was kicked out in the next election. People don’t want a perfect city.”<sup>137</sup> While Lee may not have desired a “perfect” city, she did believe that all immorality and criminality should be suppressed as much as possible. While citizens wanted a moral reputation and supported actions against unpopular targets, such as gay bars, they did not support the complete eradication of vice. Voters in 1948 may have underestimated how extensive Lee’s anti-vice reforms would be. The *Oregonian* claimed that voters interpreted Lee’s promises of law enforcement as “open to the later compromises of political longevity.” However, Portlanders found that “she wasn’t fooling. And quite a few toes got stepped on. But on the debit side, determination unless tempered by tolerance can be the first cousin to dogmatism.”<sup>138</sup> While the *Oregonian*’s summary of Lee was slightly unfair, as Lee was certainly less dogmatic than fundamentalists such as Bennett, the newspaper’s assertion that Lee was reluctant to compromise her absolute stance against vice was valid. Lee’s lack of tolerance for any criminality in Portland decreased public support for her reforms.

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<sup>135</sup> Boyd, “Homos Invade S.F.!,” 84.

<sup>136</sup> Portland City Club, “Oregon Liquor Dispensing Act,” *Portland City Club Bulletin* 29 (15 October 1948): 166.

<sup>137</sup> Alan Ota, “Vice Fighting Mayor Dorothy Lee Dies,” *Oregonian*, 20 February 1981, C1.

<sup>138</sup> *Oregonian*, “Portland’s Next Mayor,” *Oregonian*, 26 October 1952, 10.

Lee was also Portland's first female mayor. Policy makers, male workers, and newspapers after World War II encouraged middle-class white women, like Lee, to limit themselves to household affairs, or clerical and sales work.<sup>139</sup> For example, the Moses report, a plan for Portland's development, predicted economic trouble if women refused to "retire gracefully."<sup>140</sup> Women of color and working-class women's paid work was generally more expected, although not in management positions such as mayor, but their employment was also criticized for detracting their attention from domestic and family affairs. The press labeled public morality an unimportant women's issue.<sup>141</sup> Particularly vitriolic writers Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer labeled Lee a "living monument to the folly of electing women to public office."<sup>142</sup> Lee claimed that opposition to her administration was mainly due to sexism. MacColl, however, argues that her inaccessibility to business interests' control efforts was more significant.<sup>143</sup> Both factors, as well as the broad nature of her intended reforms, which increased public resistance, were important in limiting the success of her initiatives.

Fred Peterson, Lee's 1952 opponent for mayor, used "Portland needs a businessman" as his campaign slogan, emphasizing his orientation toward business interests and male status, which were traditional qualities in Portland mayors. His political philosophy was conservative, like Riley's, and emphasized minimal local

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<sup>139</sup> Although many officials encouraged women to pursue domesticity, Joanne Meyerowitz points out that popular literature often simultaneously praised women's domestic and nondomestic achievements, particularly women's public service and success ("Beyond The Feminine Mystique," 231). Many historians, such as Solinger and Hartmann, have also pointed out that perceptions of women's domesticity and paid work were highly influenced by race and class.

<sup>140</sup> Kesselman, 98.

<sup>141</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 158.

<sup>142</sup> Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer, *USA Confidential* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1952), 127.

<sup>143</sup> MacColl, *The Growth of a City*, 649.

government regulations and taxes. Like Lee, Peterson emphasized law enforcement in his campaign, but focused on juvenile delinquency. He claimed it was necessary to discuss law enforcement because “I’m running against a reformer.” Aware that “word is going around” Portland’s vice scene that “wait until Peterson is elected,” Peterson insisted “I happen to know that this town won’t ‘open up’ if I am elected.”<sup>144</sup>

Peterson, in the *Oregonian*’s estimation, offered “the sedative that will bring a quiet to city hall corridors and council chambers that have echoed to highly partisan roars of debate for the past two years.”<sup>145</sup> Peterson perceived his victory as a rejection of Lee’s campaign against bars, vice control, and municipal reform. He did not pursue anti-vice initiatives, reform, or economic growth during his administration.<sup>146</sup> He was also accused of corruption. Police and city officials turned their attention away from after-hours clubs, gambling, and gay bars, which prospered under Peterson’s administration.<sup>147</sup> Bean remained a dissenter in the council, but lacked power without allies.<sup>148</sup>

Historians have debated the effectiveness of Lee’s anti-vice campaign. Her reform administration broke sharply with conservative mayors, like Peterson and Riley, who dominated Portland historically and enabled vice operations, including gay bars. Vice levels before and after Lee’s administration were not quantifiable, but citizens and organizations generally agreed that vice operations decreased. For example, an American Social Hygiene Association survey claimed that Lee’s clean up

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<sup>144</sup> *Oregonian*, “Portland’s Next Mayor,” 11.

<sup>145</sup> *Oregonian*, “Portland’s Mayor-Elect,” 38.

<sup>146</sup> DeMarco, *A Short History*, 142.

<sup>147</sup> Uris, “Trouble in River City,” 86

campaign had resulted in fewer prostitutes in Portland.<sup>149</sup> One police informant claimed, “The town was wide open... Nobody gave a hoot until, Dorothy Lee showed up.”<sup>150</sup> A *Ladies Home Journal* article agreed that when Lee took office Portland was “a mess. The treasury was depleted, an unsavory odor clung to city hall, and gambling, prostitution, and illegal drinking were taken for granted.”<sup>151</sup> Most historians, and most available evidence, suggest that Lee’s clean up campaign decreased the visibility of vice. However, she failed to eradicate vice in less public arenas, neighborhoods farther from downtown, and county areas outside of city jurisdiction. Lee’s anti-vice campaign also decreased public support for reform, as voters believed that the perceived problem had been addressed.

After Lee’s defeat, according to historian Gordon DeMarco, “Portland slumped back into its pre-war, slow growth, conservative doziness.”<sup>152</sup> Although voters rejected Lee, historians Uris and Pitzer claim that Lee’s campaign against criminality successfully altered Portland’s self image and presentation from tolerant of vice, including gay bars, to conservative.<sup>153</sup> Other historians, such as O’Donnell and Vaughn, argue that Portland’s citizens and politicians were historically both conservative and tolerant of vice. This argument is supported by the comments of politicians, journalists, and citizens. Portlanders rejected change and elected corrupt politicians who permitted vice throughout much of Portland’s history. Because vice,

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<sup>148</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 159.

<sup>149</sup> Pitzer, “Dorothy McCullough Lee,” 29.

<sup>150</sup> MacColl, *The Growth of a City*, 610.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in Oregonian, “Mayor Lee’s Accomplishments Praised,” *Oregonian*, 18 December 1951, 8.

<sup>152</sup> DeMarco, *A Short History*, 142.

<sup>153</sup> Uris, “Trouble in River City,” 66.

in the words of early *Oregonian* editor Harvey Scott, was ascribed by city leaders to the “rude classes,” it was dismissed as not needing city intervention and not a contradiction of the city’s general conservatism and respectability.<sup>154</sup> Despite Portland’s vice-tolerant history, white middle and upper-class citizens maintained their respectable, conservative reputations by ascribing vice to outsiders, people of color, and the working class.

Portland, during the postwar years, “remained fundamentally conservative politically,” argues Northwest historian Gordon Dodds. “Paradoxically, even the innovations were designed to preserve the best of the past.”<sup>155</sup> Lee’s reform agenda was not traditional for Portland. However, she tried to garner support for her untraditional reform initiatives by presenting them as protecting Portland from change. She did this by arguing that criminality was brought by growth and outsiders. Including gay bars in her attack on all criminality in Portland, Lee failed to convince voters and political and business leaders that vice and queer presence in Portland required wholesale reforms. The city council’s anomalous attention to gay bars diminished as Lee’s anti-vice campaign faltered.

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<sup>154</sup> Quoted in O’Donnell and Vaughan, *Portland*, 35.

<sup>155</sup> Gordon Dodds, *The American Northwest: A History of Oregon and Washington* (Arlington Heights: The Forum Press, 1986), 317.

### Chapter 3: Increased Awareness of Sexual Deviance

Discussions, articles, and legislation concerning sexual deviance increased dramatically during the 1950s. National “sexual psychopath” scares, psychiatric theories, and early gay rights organizations raised public awareness of sexual deviants as groups, particularly in urban areas. Perceived threats of sexual deviance influenced local governments’ policies toward gay bars. City governments increasingly defined queer communities as a highly important social problem.

Fear of sexual deviants became more important after Lee’s administration, which treated gay bars as a secondary vice issue. Journalists, citizens, and politicians devoted substantial discussion to sexual deviance in Portland during the 1950s, but Mayor Fred Peterson did not direct police or government action against the perceived problem. He was not a reformer. Peterson advocated “steady, healthy growth,” referring to Portland’s contemporary slow rate of economic development, rather than major policy changes or government initiatives to increase economic growth.<sup>156</sup> Peterson did not pursue government regulation or enforcement against gay bars, vice, or social problems generally. He directed the police bureau to focus on juvenile delinquents and traffic. Anti-vice efforts decreased rapidly and the *Oregonian* reported in 1953 that vice had increased in Portland.<sup>157</sup> Heightened discussion of sexual deviance and its perceived threats, therefore, did not influence Portland’s policy toward gay bars until Schrunk’s reform administration.

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<sup>156</sup> *Oregonian*, “Mayor Cites City’s Gains in Last Annual Report,” *Oregonian*, 29 December 1956, 4.

<sup>157</sup> Uris, “Trouble in River City,” 88.



Newspapers, politicians, police, and citizens used terms, including sexual criminals, psychopaths, deviants, deviates, and perverts somewhat interchangeably. They often included gay bar customers in these categories. Sex deviates included “people who had sex outside of marriage, murdered little boys and girls, had sex with persons of the same sex, raped women, looked in other people’s windows, masturbated in public, or cast ‘lewd glances,’” in George Chauncey’s words.<sup>158</sup> Terms remained undefined even as legislation was drafted. For example, Oregon Attorney General Robert Thornton tried to define “moral degenerates” in 1959. Legislators had introduced the term into Oregon law in 1935 with a sterilization law requiring that lists of all “moral degenerates” and “sexual perverts” be submitted to the Oregon’s Board of Eugenics. Eugenics movements connected homophobia, racism, and classism, arguing that minority groups were physically and morally undesirable and threatened the progress of the nation if measures to limit their influence were not implemented. Thornton was unable to find conclusive definitions of “degenerates” in medical texts or court decisions and finally left the term open to the Board of Eugenics’ interpretation.<sup>159</sup>

As Joan Scott notes, the construction of identities has political consequences.<sup>160</sup> Members of the identity groups, officials, citizen organizations, and newspapers often contest how groups are defined and described. Whether generally accepted or contested, group definitions influence policy decisions. The grouping of

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<sup>158</sup> George Chauncey, “The Postwar Sex Crime Panic,” in *True Stories from the American Past* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), 170.

<sup>159</sup> Cook, “The History of Oregon’s Sodomy Laws.”

<sup>160</sup> Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” 412.



queers with violent, coercive criminals by newspapers, officials, and citizen groups increased the perception of queer communities' menace to society. The *Detroit Times*, for example, called for programs "detecting the deviate before he becomes a killer," presuming a connection between sexual deviance and violence.<sup>161</sup> Highly publicized sex crimes and new sexual psychopath laws encouraged a public perception of queers as part of a continuum of sexual psychopaths. Gay bar customers became viewed as potentially threatening sexual criminals.<sup>162</sup>

### **Growing Concerns about Deviance**

Concerns about sex crimes and deviance were not necessarily linked to real increases. According to theorist Estelle Freedman, sex crime panics appeared in cities throughout the U.S. before and after, but not during, World War II, when arrests for sex crimes were actually higher.<sup>163</sup> Similarly, Fejes shows that growing concerns about child molestation in Miami were not driven by actual increases, as the number of reported cases between 1950 and 1953 increased proportionately with the size of the population.<sup>164</sup>

The increase of social conservatism during the Cold War encouraged suspicion of deviants, political and sexual, as endangering U.S. communities. Anti-communist politicians, such as Joseph McCarthy, suggested that queers were more susceptible to communism and betrayal of the nation's interests. Queers, both admitted and suspected, were arrested and dismissed from their jobs in numerous fields, including

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<sup>161</sup> Chauncey, "The Postwar Sex Crime Panic," 166.

<sup>162</sup> Fejes, "Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic," 318. See also Chauncey and Freedman.

<sup>163</sup> Estelle Freedman, "'Uncontrolled Desires': The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960," *Journal of American History* 74 (June 1987): 84, 96.

government, education, and political activism. Congress also revised immigration law in 1952 to exclude queers, based in definitions of psychological illness.<sup>165</sup> Both foreign and domestic security proponents used the keyword “containment,” which influenced discussions of sexuality.<sup>166</sup> In addition to literal attempts to limit queers’ contact with and potential influence on non-deviant individuals, scientific and government “experts,” popular culture, and academics tried to contain deviance by laying out guidelines for acceptable sexual behavior.<sup>167</sup>

The Kinsey reports, which for many people described an unexpected number of people with queer sexual experiences, also resulted in increased psychiatric writing about queers, according to Jennifer Terry. Attacking Kinsey’s suggestion that queerness was natural and common, psychiatrists produced “a number of very vicious books” for popular audiences.<sup>168</sup> Historian Jeffrey Escoffier argues that the highly publicized controversies surrounding Kinsey’s work and McCarthy’s investigations were highly influential in making queerness a public issue in the United States.<sup>169</sup>

Psychiatry and the definition of sick and healthy sexual behavior gained authority after World War II, due partly to psychiatrists’ screening of recruits during the war. While psychiatric theories about queerness were not new, they became more discussed and influential in popular media and government. Newspaper writers,

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<sup>164</sup> Fejes, “Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic,” 319

<sup>165</sup> Nan Hunter, “Identity, Speech and Equality,” in *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture* (Routledge: New York, 1995), 125.

<sup>166</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1988), 13.

<sup>167</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983), 11.

<sup>168</sup> Jennifer Terry, “The Seductive Power of Science in the Making of Deviant Subjectivity,” in *Science and Homosexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 277.

politicians, law enforcement officials, and citizen groups, the primary promoters of legislation against sexual deviants, based their arguments in psychiatry.<sup>170</sup> For example, in “Facts about Deviates” an article published in the *Oregon Journal*, Claire Argow, Executive Director of the Oregon Prison Association, urged that everyone “remain completely scientific in our approach- not legalistic, moralistic, or punitive.”<sup>171</sup> She, and others, promoted psychiatric definitions and responses to sexual deviance as more effective than previous approaches based in punishing individual deviants for criminal actions.

Clergymen, police, and court officials had often defined queerness as a moral or criminal issue, but psychiatric explanations convinced many people that in addition, and more importantly, it was a form of illness.<sup>172</sup> Psychiatric theories did not replace assumptions that queerness was defined by gender transgression, but added other types of deviant behavior. For example, popular psychiatric and sociological books often portrayed gay men as effeminate, but increasingly linked this gender transgression to crimes against children.<sup>173</sup> According to historian Fred Fejes, “as long as homosexuality was regarded as gender inversion- ‘males with a feminine bent’ - it was seen as a harmless, almost comical manifestation.”<sup>174</sup> However, when queers were perceived as not only gender misfits, but also highly sexually aggressive, perceived dangers linked to queerness increased. This shift in thinking about queerness did not

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<sup>169</sup> Escoffier, “Homosexuality and the Sociological Imagination,” 250.

<sup>170</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 140.

<sup>171</sup> Claire Argow, “Facts about Deviates,” *Oregon Journal*, 27 March 1952, 20.

<sup>172</sup> Chauncey, “The Postwar Sex Crime Panic,” 165.

<sup>173</sup> Escoffier, “Homosexuality and the Sociological Imagination,” 252.

<sup>174</sup> Fejes, “Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic,” 317.

only affect gay men. Donna Penn argues that after World War II, “lesbians were portrayed not only as gender transgressors but also as sexual demons.”<sup>175</sup> Broad definitions of sexual deviance and discussion of psychopaths increased public concern by complicating identification of queers. “Even the next-door neighbor could be one,” Chauncey writes, when non-queers no longer assumed that deviants would always be marked by non-normative gender display.<sup>176</sup>

Increasing perceptions of queerness as illness made it a more central societal concern. For example, in “Queer People,” *Newsweek* argued against people holding an older view of queerness as vice, rather than a form of illness threatening society and children. The magazine defined “sex perverts,” in its words, as queers, exhibitionists, sadists, and pedophiles, and cautioned against tolerance. Advocating a broad definition of sexual deviants, the article connected all sexual deviants with violent crimes. Sexual deviants were “too often regarded merely as a ‘queer’ person who never hurts anyone but himself. Then the mangled form of some victim focuses public attention on the degenerates’ work,” it claimed.<sup>177</sup>

### **Sexual Psychopaths and Anti-Sexual Deviance Legislation**

Psychiatrists, politicians, and journalists created and used the concept of sexual psychopaths, according to Estelle Freedman. Sexual psychopaths were not defined by a specific crime, instead constituting an identity of sexually threatening and violent men.<sup>178</sup> The extent of citizen fears concerning violent sexual criminals, and

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<sup>175</sup> Penn, “The Sexualized Woman,” 359.

<sup>176</sup> Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 360.

<sup>177</sup> *Newsweek*, “Queer People,” *Newsweek* (10 October 1949): 52.

<sup>178</sup> Freedman, “Uncontrolled Desires,” 98.

particularly threats to children, was illustrated in a 1964 *Oregonian* article. Portland's vice squad asked local newspapers to inform citizens that widespread rumors of sexual mutilation of children were false. The police reported that they had received many queries about the rumor. The *Oregonian* confirmed that it had also received numerous calls, with alleged crime locations ranging from Aloha to North Portland restrooms.<sup>179</sup>

More than half of U.S. states passed sexual psychopath laws after World War II.<sup>180</sup> The laws generally gave more authority to psychiatrists and included various nonviolent sexual acts, such as sodomy.<sup>181</sup> Portland and Oregon passed sexual psychopath laws, but mainly after Lee's administration. In 1949, for example, Oregon state police officers reported that there was no need for new laws targeting "sex fiends."<sup>182</sup> However, the perceived need increased. At the end of Lee's term, in 1952, she held a meeting with parent groups, schools, court, police, prison, and mental health officers to discuss indeterminate prison sentencing for sex deviates. They concluded that contemporary psychopath laws were inadequate.<sup>183</sup> A City Club report agreed. According to the report, psychopaths were not considered insane by Oregon law because they did not lack the ability to separate right and wrong. They therefore served set prison terms. After completing their sentence, "although a psychiatrist

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<sup>179</sup> *Oregonian*, "Sexual Atrocities Rumor Branded False by Police," *Oregonian*, 26 October 1964, 21.

<sup>180</sup> D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 17-18.

<sup>181</sup> Freedman, "Uncontrolled Desires," 83.

<sup>182</sup> Associated Press, "Many States to Crackdown on Handling of Sex Fiends," *Oregon Journal*, 7 December 1949, 21.

<sup>183</sup> *Oregon Journal*, "Prison Terms Change Talked in Sex Crimes," *Oregon Journal*, 25 February 1952, p 1.

might be sure that he would offend again, possibly in a more serious way,” they were released. “Many dangerous sex criminals do just this,” warned the City Club.<sup>184</sup>

Discussion of sexual psychopaths and sexual deviants emphasized threats to children. For example, arguing for jail expansion, the City Club claimed that “too much emphasis cannot be given to the fact that young minor offenders” were put in cells with “thugs, drug addicts, homosexuals and ordinary ‘toughs.’”<sup>185</sup> According to historian John D’Emilio, popular literature in the late 1940s reinforced the perception of increasing sex crimes against children.<sup>186</sup> Women’s magazines began printing articles on protecting children from sexual offenders in the 1950s.<sup>187</sup>

Freedman points out that increasing acceptance of female sexual desire encouraged a new focus on children, rather than women, as sexual victims, as a way of reinforcing boundaries between normal and deviant sexuality.<sup>188</sup> Many Americans believed that white society had become more sexually liberal and that stigmas attached to female sexuality outside of marriage, although not eradicated, were weakened. As marital status and female sexual passivity became less enforced boundaries defining normal sexuality, age, race, and queerness became more important demarcations of unaccepted sexuality. Freedman, D’Emilio, and Solinger describe how the white middle class was able to maintain claims of sexual virtue by denigrating African

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<sup>184</sup> Portland City Club, “Oregon Mental Health Laws,” *Portland City Club Bulletin* 32 (19 October 1951): 287.

<sup>185</sup> Portland City Club, “Report on Jail - Municipal Court - Police Facilities Levy,” *Portland City Club Bulletin* 45 (16 October 1964): 49B, 49D.

<sup>186</sup> John D’Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 68.

<sup>187</sup> Freedman, “Uncontrolled Desires,” 92.

<sup>188</sup> Freedman, “Uncontrolled Desires,” 101.

American sexuality as immoral.<sup>189</sup> Linking queerness and pedophilia also connected two forbidden sexual objects for men, children and other men, as boundaries defining normal and deviant sexual behavior, according to Freedman.<sup>190</sup> To argue that pedophiles were not queer was “an unpopular and extremely controversial thesis,” according to *One Institute Quarterly* writer Andrew Bradbury.<sup>191</sup>

Lee’s office submitted a “pervert curb” to voters in 1952. It was presented as a response to the “recent outbreak of child molesting” and included a sex deviate education program, mandatory indeterminate sentencing, state institutions for sex offenders, and psychiatrists appointed to work with courts.<sup>192</sup> Oregon established a psychopathic offender state law in 1953, which punished second convictions of sodomy with life imprisonment and potential commitment for mental illness. This law was amended in 1955, adding a maximum sentence of life imprisonment for detaining or enticing a child with intent to commit certain sex offenses. However, this was rarely used in convicting and sentencing.<sup>193</sup> In 1957, a plan was proposed, but not passed, to implement a “central investigating and identification bureau dealing with sex deviates,” including both “known and suspected deviates,” to facilitate sex crime investigations.<sup>194</sup> Citizens and officials continued to express concerns that legislation and enforcement against sexual deviants was insufficient. For example, in 1963, state representative William Gallagher held a “mothers’ meeting” of about 200 people in

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<sup>189</sup> Solinger, *Wake up Little Susie*, 11.

<sup>190</sup> Freedman, “Uncontrolled Desires,” 103.

<sup>191</sup> Andrew Bradbury, “Pederasty and Male Prostitution,” *One Institute Quarterly* 4 (Spring 1962): 64.

<sup>192</sup> Oregonian, “Pervert Curb on Plan List,” *Oregonian*, 29 February 1952, 1.

<sup>193</sup> Marge Davenport, “‘Get Perverts Off Streets,’ All Police Officers Ask,” *Oregon Journal*, 4 January 1962, 4.



Portland to build public support for five more bills against sexual deviance in the state legislature. The *Oregon Journal* interpreted crowd sentiment as favoring stricter enforcement of existing laws, but not necessarily opposing new legislation. For example, one woman interrupted the legislator's speech to announce, "I say we should hang them (sex offenders)," and received loud applause.<sup>195</sup>

### **Media Coverage of Sex Crimes**

Fejes argues that, in Miami, heavy newspaper coverage of two sex crimes resulted in a "new awareness" of the city's queer community. Previously queers "had been regarded as a colorful if somewhat embarrassing part of the Miami nightlife and beach scene; now they were seen as a serious threat to the safety and moral wellbeing of the community."<sup>196</sup> Highly publicized local sex crimes increased public discussions of sexual deviance and were often used to justify sexual psychopath laws. Articles about sex crimes also drew customers for newspapers.<sup>197</sup> Freedman notes that although crimes publicized by the media were usually severe and isolated, resulting regulation targeted socially unaccepted sexual deviants of all kinds, including queers.<sup>198</sup> For example, following the unsolved murder of a child in 1963, the *Oregonian* wrote, about sexual deviants, "The question fairly explodes: Why are there so many in one relatively small area allowed to remain free to continue their perverted

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<sup>194</sup> Cook, "The History of Oregon's Sodomy Laws."

<sup>195</sup> *Oregon Journal*, "200 Jam Mothers' Meeting," *Oregon Journal*, 19 January 1963, p 1.

<sup>196</sup> Fejes, 306.

<sup>197</sup> Chauncey, "The Postwar Sex Crime Panic," 162.

<sup>198</sup> Freedman, "Uncontrolled Desires," 84.



practices which too frequently end in violent death?" The solution, according to the *Oregonian*, was more legislation, enforcement, and incarceration of sexual deviants.<sup>199</sup>

In many cities in the 1950s, media coverage of sex crimes and deviance resulted in crackdowns on gay bars. Crackdowns were an immediate and visible police response to public concerns. For example, Fejes describes how the media initiated Miami's crackdown on gay bars by linking queers with violence and increasing public demand for local government action. Despite frequent articles about sexual deviants and sex crimes in the *Oregonian* and *Oregon Journal*, Peterson's administration did not crackdown on gay bars. For example, police discovered a "homosexual ring," consisting of eight teenagers and four adults during Peterson's administration, but no actions against gay bars followed.<sup>200</sup> In comparison, reform mayor Schrunk used a similar 1963 news series about a homosexual ring in Portland to argue that sexual deviants were recruiting youths and that the city needed to take measures against gay bars and pornography.<sup>201</sup> Mayors' goals highly influenced Portland's response to media depictions of queer communities' threats.

Theorists Steven Cohn and James Gallagher argue that newspapers can take responsive or active roles in public issues.<sup>202</sup> However, as Cohn and Gallagher and note, even if a newspaper defines its role as reactive, "by covering a dispute extensively, the media legitimates the demands of the conflicting parties as proper foci

<sup>199</sup> *Oregonian*, "Deviates Free to Roam," *Oregonian*, 12 January 1963, 10.

<sup>200</sup> *Oregon Journal*, "Homosexual Ring Nipped," *Oregon Journal*, 19 January 1956, 10.

<sup>201</sup> *Oregonian*, "More Secret Indictments Returned in Vice Probe," *Oregonian*, 26 October 1963, 6.

<sup>202</sup> Steven Cohn and James Gallagher, "Gay Movements and Legal Change: Some Aspects of the Dynamics of a Social Problem," *Social Problems* 32.1 (1984): 79.

of public concern.”<sup>203</sup> The *Oregonian* and *Oregon Journal* did not directly cause city actions against gay bars and took a reactive role in reporting on mayor and council actions against gay bars after they occurred. However, both newspapers were active in raising concerns about sexual deviants and linking queers with coercive sexual criminals, by writing editorials and giving prominent placement to news articles about sexual deviants.

Portland’s newspapers devoted frequent coverage to the 1961 Crooked River Gorge murders, until Governor Mark Hatfield commuted Jeannace Freeman’s death sentence in 1964. Freeman and Gertrude Jackson had an affair and killed Jackson’s children. Both were found guilty of murder. The case did not result in immediate increased regulation of sexual deviants or efforts to close gay bars, but strengthened public connection of queers with sex crimes and threats to children. *The Ladder*, an early gay rights publication, opposed Freeman’s execution but noted, “this case certainly does nothing to advance the image of the homosexual in the public eye.”<sup>204</sup>

Estelle Freedman argues that by the late 1950s, incarcerated lesbians “had become stock cultural characters associated with threats to sexual and social order.” Stereotypes of aggressive white lesbians drew on Cold War concerns about the need to contain female sexuality within domestic relationships, she explains.<sup>205</sup> The idea that Freeman, perceived to be an aggressive white lesbian, threatened sexual and social order influenced local newspaper coverage. Press interpretation of the Crooked River

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<sup>203</sup> Cohn and Gallagher “Gay Movements,” 80.

<sup>204</sup> Rosa Connor, “Jeannace Freeman – Eradication of a Misfit?,” *The Ladder* 7 (August 193): 8.

<sup>205</sup> Estelle Freedman, “The Prison Lesbian: Race, Class, and the Construction of the Aggressive Female Homosexual, 1915-1965,” *Feminist Studies* 22 (Summer 1996): 405.

Gorge case changed over time, increasingly emphasizing Freeman's queerness and threats of contagion. Initial articles on the apprehension of Freeman and Jackson reported that mothers throughout Oregon were relieved at the news that the murders were not committed by a sex deviate, illustrating the already present concern about threats posed to children by sex deviates.<sup>206</sup> However, within a month, Freeman's masculine appearance and queerness was highlighted with pictures and descriptions. The need to contain sexual deviants was stressed in subsequent articles such as "Jeannace Touches Off Riot at Penitentiary," run on the front page of the *Oregon Journal* in 1963. According to the article, a riot began when prison officials placed Freeman in isolation for turning up her radio to drown out organ music from the prison chapel. Two female prisoners then "became violent" to protest her isolation, which was followed by another prisoner going "wild." Citing a "three page handwritten, violently homosexual letter" from Freeman to another prisoner, prison authorities and the newspaper assured readers that Freeman would be supervised outside her cell to ensure that her queerness would not spread to other prisoners.<sup>207</sup>

Fejes notes that a crime twenty-five miles outside of Miami "provided an opportunity" which organizations, with already developed arguments about suppressing sexual deviance, seized upon.<sup>208</sup> Similarly, writers about Oregon's sexual deviance policies drew on Freeman's case. For example, psychologist John Watkins offered her as an example of the need for legislation increasing psychiatric facilities

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<sup>206</sup> Oregonian. "Mother of Slain Children Admits Complicity: Other Woman Also Arrested in California," *Oregonian*, 17 May 1961, 1.

<sup>207</sup> Oregon Journal, "Jeannace Touches Off Riot at Penitentiary," *Oregon Journal*, 23 December 1963, 1.

and authority.<sup>209</sup> Freeman was also cited explicitly as a reason to suppress gay bars in Portland's 1964-65 council debates.

### **Theories of Cause, Treatment, and Categorization**

Portland's newspapers printed many articles by law enforcement officials and psychiatrists about causes, treatment, and categorization of sexual deviance. Their explanations influenced policy proposals toward queers. Psychiatrists often claimed to counsel against drastic measures, but generally included queers among sexual deviates and suggested control measures of some sort. For example, psychologist John Watkins supported a legal distinction between sexual offenders and other sexual deviants because it would encourage sexual deviants not charged with crimes to seek treatment. Watkins, apparently arguing against advocates of rounding up all gay men after each violent crime against children, claimed, "We cannot treat as identical the aggressive, hate-loaded and sadistic predator of children, with the meek, passive homosexual who frequents 'gay bars,' restricts his contacts to other adult homosexuals, and who lives in constant fear of indictment and humiliation." However, he also recommended that sex offenders and queers be admitted to the same treatment center, minimizing distinctions between the two groups.<sup>210</sup>

Some groups tried to separate categories within sexual deviance, particularly basing their distinctions on perceived threats. For example, Oregon District Attorney Hattie Kremer divided sex offenders into the categories of young people, adult

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<sup>208</sup> Fejes, 320.

<sup>209</sup> John Watkins, "Legislators Need Cool Heads in Drawing Legal Controls," *Oregonian*, 10 March 1963, 39.

<sup>210</sup> Watkins, "Legislators Need Cool Heads," 39.

seducers of girls, senile molesters, and sex deviates.<sup>211</sup> The City Club distinguished ordinary “psychopaths” from “sex deviates or sex psychopaths.” Sex deviates and sex psychopaths, claimed the City Club, exhibited a “wide range of expression, most of which are in the nuisance category. The homosexual is somewhat more serious although frequently treatable. The so-called ‘sex killer’ is extremely dangerous and is in need of rigid control.”<sup>212</sup>

Debates about the causes of queerness also influenced policies concerning sexual deviants and gay bars. According to psychiatrist Irving Bieber, homosexuality was “a pathologic bio-social, psychosexual adaptation consequent to pervasive fears surrounding the expression of heterosexual impulses. In our view, every homosexual is, in reality, a ‘latent’ heterosexual.”<sup>213</sup> However, other theorists argued that many heterosexuals were latent homosexuals, but were able “to repress and sublimate a universal perverse impulse,” toward homosexuality, in Bieber’s words.<sup>214</sup> Lionel Ovesey created a category of “pseudohomosexuality,” composed of men who were not interested in sex with men, but who were so irresponsible that they were “adaptive failures” and might eventually become “overt” homosexuals without psychiatric assistance.<sup>215</sup> Oregon’s legislative Interim Committee on Social Problems argued that queerness could be “‘situationally caused’ and cease when the situation is changed.”<sup>216</sup> The ideas of situational queerness, latency, and pseudohomosexuality encouraged

<sup>211</sup> *Oregonian*, “Police Cite Sex Problem,” *Oregonian*, 7 October 1961, 4.

<sup>212</sup> Portland City Club, “Oregon Mental Health Laws,” 290.

<sup>213</sup> Irving Bieber, *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962), 220.

<sup>214</sup> Bieber, *Homosexuality*, 274.

<sup>215</sup> Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 24.

people to marry and conform to gender norms, support psychiatric treatment, and try to limit queers' contact with non-queers.<sup>217</sup> Politicians and police presented control of gay bars, either through suppression or isolation, as ways to limit queers' contact with and potential 'enticement' of non-queers.

Psychiatrists and other experts in the 1950s and 1960s often focused on childhood as a crucial time in preventing sexual deviance. For example, Oregon prison official Claire Argow cited a Sing Sing prison survey of sex offenders that concluded "every offender had experienced severe emotional deprivation in childhood from such causes as brutal, neglectful, or over-indulgent parents." Experts that located the cause of sexual deviance in childhood divided into two basic groups that either blamed incorrect parenting or argued that adult deviants recruited children.

Parenting was blamed for various social problems, including queerness. "The American housewife was a 'Typhoid Mary' whose misdirected energies were a toxin spreading outward through the family to the nation," causing teenage sex, soldier desertions, and "the 'murky smog' of male homosexuality spreading across the country," writes historian Barbara Ehrenreich.<sup>218</sup> Public officials and popular culture argued that, whether women did or did not work outside their homes, women's primary role in the Cold War was to build strong families and raise physically and

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<sup>216</sup> Oregonian, "Ten Oregon Legislative Proposals Aimed at Sex Offenders," *Oregonian*, 6 January 1963, 29.

<sup>217</sup> Chauncey, "The Postwar Sex Crime Panic," 177.

<sup>218</sup> Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 101.

emotionally healthy citizens.<sup>219</sup> Attacks on mothers, both African American and white, Rickie Solinger argues, were prompted by fears that after the war, men would be unable to reassert their traditional dominance in both family and cultural life.<sup>220</sup> Officials particularly attacked the mothering skills of women of color. For example, researchers such as E. Franklin Frazier blamed unmarried or domineering African American mothers for creating demasculinized sons, promiscuous daughters, and illegitimacy.<sup>221</sup>

Both full-time mothers' boredom and women's wage work were condemned. Experts cautioned that wage work could lead to neglect of children and that housewives' over-emphasis on mothering could produce inappropriate performance of gender roles, particularly male effeminacy, which they assumed was related to queerness. Cited in the *Oregon Journal*, psychiatrist Gwilym Roberts urged that women concentrate their attention on children. "If you want to cure this problem of sex deviation you must have mothers who can really love children and there must be a man who can really love the mother," he claimed.<sup>222</sup> On the other hand, Bieber argued that too much affection contributed to queerness. When mothers favored children over their husbands and disinterested and hostile fathers did not provide proper models of masculinity, Bieber asserted, parents produced demasculinized, and therefore queer,

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<sup>219</sup> Susan Hartmann, "Women's Employment and the Domestic Ideal in the Early Cold War Years," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 85.

<sup>220</sup> Rickie Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race Before Roe v. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 21.

<sup>221</sup> Ruth Feldstein, "'I Wanted the Whole World to See': Race, Gender, and Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 269.



boys.<sup>223</sup> *Better Homes and Gardens*, for example, warned fathers, “You have a horror of seeing your son a pantywaist, but he won’t get red blood and self reliance if you leave the whole job of making a he-man of him to his mother.”<sup>224</sup> A child’s disorder, wrote Bieber, “is almost always evidence of the pervasive effects of parental psychopathology.”<sup>225</sup>

Those who argued that queers recruited children included police and government officials. In 1950, the U.S. Senate cautioned “These perverts will frequently attempt to entice normal individuals to engage in perverted practices. This is particularly true in the case of young and impressionable people who might come under the influence of a pervert.”<sup>226</sup> In Portland, gay men were accused of “wooing” public school students with bribes. The likelihood that these students would grow up to be queer was so high, according to one Portland police officer, the arrested adults would “be doing those kids a favor if they had just taken them out and shot them.”<sup>227</sup>

News coverage of a 1964 court case in Portland also reinforced the perceived connection between queers and the recruitment of children. A 46-year old man pled guilty to sodomy with a 12-year-old boy. He was sentenced to life imprisonment after a psychological report offered no hope of cure. “I feel that you are a menace to society,” pronounced Judge Robert Jones as he read the sentence. The defendant had

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<sup>222</sup> *Oregon Journal*, “Sex Pattern Starts Early: Psychopath Rehabilitation Declared not Hopeless,” *Oregon Journal*, 3 December 1949, 2.

<sup>223</sup> Ernest Havemann, “Scientists Search for the Answer to a Tough and Puzzling Question: Why,” *Life* 56 (26 June 1964): 78.

<sup>224</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 147.

<sup>225</sup> Bieber, *Homosexuality*, 42.

<sup>226</sup> Rupp, *A Desired Past*, 141.

<sup>227</sup> *Oregon Journal*, “Smut Magazine, Sex Ring Tie Brings Warning from Mayor,” *Oregon Journal*, 25 October 1963, 4.



“preyed on the children of the community and perhaps led some of them into a life of homosexuality of their own... You took an otherwise normal boy and set up a perversion,” claimed the judge.<sup>228</sup>

The myth that queerness spread through pedophilia drew on medical language and models. John Sorenson, head of Miami’s vice squad, wanted to keep each gay man in prison “as long as I felt there was a danger of him getting out and infecting children.”<sup>229</sup> The *Oregonian* warned that the public should be highly concerned “that older, confirmed homosexuals are recruiting innocent young boys into their groups and persuading them to adopt perverted sex habit which can leave permanent mental scars and destroy their chances for normal healthy adulthood.” The newspaper announced that undiscovered homosexual rings needed to be found, “so the invisible ‘cancer’ may be extirpated.”<sup>230</sup>

### Increased Awareness of Urban Queer Communities

D’Emilio dates the early 1960s as the beginning of widespread popular media exploration of queerness beyond coverage of sex crimes and psychiatry.<sup>231</sup> Officials had previously limited discourse about the subject through obscenity laws. By issuing rulings narrowing the scope of obscenity laws in 1957, the Warren Court was partly responsible for increasing discourse about queerness.<sup>232</sup> Increasingly visible queer communities, popular sociological and psychological works, pulp fiction, and

<sup>228</sup> Oregon Journal, “Sex Deviate Sentenced to Life Imprisonment after Admitting Guilt,” *Oregon Journal*, 6 May 1964, 7.

<sup>229</sup> Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Meridian, 1976), 125.

<sup>230</sup> *Oregonian*, “They Prey on Boys,” *Oregonian*, 26 October 1963, 10.

<sup>231</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 138.

newspaper and magazine articles about “the homosexual problem” increased awareness of the existence of queer groups rather than only isolated individuals.<sup>233</sup> By 1964, according to Achilles, “anyone familiar with the life and literature of the contemporary urban scene... is well aware that homosexuals exist in groups.”<sup>234</sup>

Gay bars both encouraged and grew from increasing awareness of queer communities. Heightened awareness encouraged separate queer institutions, including bars, by increasing the division between queers and non-queers, according to historian Lillian Faderman.<sup>235</sup> The growing visibility of gay bars, and the visible queer display of butch and femme relationships common in 1950s lesbian bars, also encouraged press coverage of queer communities. “The shift in public attitudes towards gays and lesbians during the 1960s, as typified by the press’s move from silence about gays to its fascination with the exotic and unknown, required at its root a persistently obvious bar culture,” write Kennedy and Davis.<sup>236</sup>

News articles about queer communities did not necessarily indicate acceptance. For example, *Life* magazine’s “Homosexuality in America,” claimed “A secret world grows open and bolder. Society is forced to look at it- and try to understand it.” However, this was “a sad and often sordid world.”<sup>237</sup> Published

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<sup>232</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 132.

<sup>233</sup> Jeffrey Escoffier, “Homosexuality and the Sociological Imagination: The 1950s and 1960s,” in *A Queer World: The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 248.

<sup>234</sup> Achilles, “The Homosexual Bar,” 11.

<sup>235</sup> Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 160.

<sup>236</sup> Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: the History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 111, 151.

<sup>237</sup> Paul Welch, “Homosexuality in America,” *Life* 56 (26 June 1964): 66.

studies of queerness also relied heavily on personal histories of psychiatric patients and criminals, reinforcing the stigmatization of queers as sick and dangerous.<sup>238</sup>

### Early Gay Rights Organizations

According to Freedman, postwar expansion of queer identities and communities, anti-queer rhetoric and legislation, and the formation of queer political groups to combat suppression reciprocally encouraged each other.<sup>239</sup> Early gay rights groups both promoted and drew on increased public awareness of queer communities. The Mattachine Society, One Incorporated, and Daughters of Bilitis formed in California in the early 1950s. By 1964, the number of gay rights organizations had grown to twelve, by Achilles' count, but were still concentrated in California.<sup>240</sup> A 1959 response to a *Ladder* reader's letter stated that there were no Daughters of Bilitis chapters in the Pacific Northwest. The editor attributed this to lack of interest in the area. She had "been told that the homophile women in that area 'are not yet ready.'"<sup>241</sup> However, letters to the editor and oral history show that some Northwesterners read early gay rights magazines. Rich's Cigar Store in downtown Portland sold approximately 15 copies per month of *One* magazine in the 1950s.<sup>242</sup> Marc Thorsen remembered distributing Mattachine magazines in three or four

<sup>238</sup> Achilles, "The Homosexual Bar," 1-2.

<sup>239</sup> Estelle Freedman, "The Historical Construction of Homosexuality in the U.S.," *Socialist Review* 25.1 (1995): 42.

<sup>240</sup> Achilles, "The Homosexual Bar," 46.

<sup>241</sup> The Ladder, "Letters to the editor," *The Ladder* 3 (August 1959): 23.

<sup>242</sup> Tom Cook, "OSU Professor Starts Early Gay Magazine," *Alternative Connection* 3 (January 1994): 1.

newsstands and gay bars, including the Harbor Club, in the 1950s.<sup>243</sup> This suggests that there was at least a small group of gay rights supporters in the area.

Early gay rights groups combated the negative awareness of queers brought by news coverage of crimes and psychiatric studies defining queers as sick. The Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis pointed out that psychiatric studies skewed their findings by studying mental patients rather than the general population. Rather than wholly rejecting scientific attempts to explain queerness, they called for less-biased studies. Terry argues that early gay rights groups accepted social science studies of queers as a potential route to visibility and acceptance as normal, worthy, and numerous people.<sup>244</sup>

Middle-class membership and desires for respectability divided early gay rights organizations somewhat from gay bars, but the groups generally opposed restrictive measures. In the *Ladder*, the Daughters of Bilitis argued that “‘gay’ bars per se are not harmful to society,” and closing them would not erase queer communities.<sup>245</sup> The Mattachine Society supported legal efforts to counter anti-gay bar actions and mimeographed a small guide to gay bars. Most of the bars were in San Francisco and Los Angeles, but Portland was also included.<sup>246</sup> However, the society

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<sup>243</sup> Marc Thorsen, “Fighting Oppression in 1950’s Portland: A First Person Account,” <http://home.teleport.com/~glapn/ar04015.html>, 12 February 2002.

<sup>244</sup> Terry, “The Seductive Power of Science,” 277-278.

<sup>245</sup> Martin, “The Gay Bar,” 9.

<sup>246</sup> Martin Meeker, “Behind the Mask of Respectability: Reconsidering the Mattachine Society and Male Homophile Practice, 1950s and 1960s,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10.1 (2001): 105-106.

specified that its support for rights of assembly and solicitation did not include public sexual acts.<sup>247</sup>

News coverage of debates about gay rights and gay bars in California also increased awareness of queer communities in Oregon. In San Francisco, candidates for mayor made early gay rights groups and queer residents a major campaign issue in 1959. Candidate Russell Wolden accused incumbent Christopher of making San Francisco “the national headquarters of the organized homosexuals in the United States.”<sup>248</sup> Christopher was reelected but directed a crackdown on gay bars. San Francisco’s largest raid occurred in 1961 when 81 men and 14 women were arrested at the Tay-Bush Inn.

San Francisco’s 1961 “gayola” scandal also received national coverage. The term merged “payola,” referring to corruption and bribery, and “gay.” Gay bar owners accused police and ABC officers of taking bribes. All of the bars that testified were shut down.<sup>249</sup> Following the scandal, in 1962, San Francisco gay bar owners formed the Tavern Guild of gay businesses. The Guild opposed discriminatory practices by the ABC and promoted the right of queer customers to congregate. The guild, for example, published a free brochure of legal advice on arrest or harassment from the police.<sup>250</sup> This politicization of gay bars and their owners occurred much earlier in San Francisco than in other cities, according to D’Emilio.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Meeker, “Behind the Mask,” 105-106.

<sup>248</sup> Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 346.

<sup>249</sup> D’Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 462.

<sup>250</sup> Stryker and Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay*, 44.

<sup>251</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 176, 183.

### Gay Bars during Peterson's Administration

While other cities initiated crackdowns on queer communities, gay bars operated in Portland throughout Peterson's administration with little city intervention. Awareness of sexual deviance was high, but as a conservative, inactive administration, Peterson did little to suppress gay bars. "I think government is only supposed to be in business to do things that can't be handled by people in private business," he explained.<sup>252</sup> The vice squad visited gay bars such as the Half Moon Tavern, but neither police nor city officials tried to close the bar. The Harbor Club was disturbed less often, in customers' speculation, because the owner bribed the police.<sup>253</sup> According to Norm Costa, "the police never bothered the Harbor Club, he must of paid pretty well, but the Tavern... the Tavern they pulled you off the barstool and roused you once in a while. They weren't friendly."<sup>254</sup> One customer remembered that police intervention in Portland, other than particular officers "with an axe to grind," was generally sporadic and most often centered on minor violations, such as noise or customers gathering out on the streets, rather than wholesale efforts to close gay bars.<sup>255</sup>

Several neighborhood taverns east of downtown served a non-queer clientele during the day and queer customers at night. For example, Ric King owned the Jamboree Room, in North Portland, between 1956 and 1960. Around ten, the Jamboree's clientele transitioned from non-queer Russian men to queer customers.

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<sup>252</sup> Keith Tillstrom, "Ex-Mayor Likes New Mayor," *Oregon Journal*, 21 March 1977, Fred Peterson biography file, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>253</sup> Cook, "Portland's Gay Bars."

<sup>254</sup> Costa, interview.

Despite general knowledge of his sexual orientation, King did not recall trouble with OLCC or the council, and was able to obtain one of a limited number of cardroom licenses. He speculated that local taverns were not bothered by OLCC because they did not serve food or hard liquor, and therefore were subject to fewer restrictions.<sup>256</sup> Their location outside of downtown also may have contributed to less city scrutiny.

The council favorably recommended gay bars' liquor license renewals during Peterson's administration. Councilors unanimously supported Johnnie Honnegger's license renewal for the Harbor Club in 1953. Marijan Kokich, previous owner of the Rathskellar and Club Rhumba, received a positive recommendation from the council despite an unfavorable evaluation from the liquor license supervisor, a history of violations, and Kokich's admission that he served "a pretty rough crowd." Peterson and council members William Bowes and Stanley Earl voted in favor of Kokich's application after he assured the council that he knew he was required to obey laws. Ormond Bean and Nathan Boody were outvoted.<sup>257</sup>

Peterson designated juvenile delinquency and traffic top police priorities. Peterson's targeting of juvenile delinquency addressed some of the same social concerns as crackdowns on gay bars, sexual deviance, and vice. Similar to explanations of queerness, experts claimed that juvenile delinquency was caused by "childhood maladjustment," in the City Club's words, leading to adult criminality.<sup>258</sup> Although efforts to control juvenile delinquency drew on fears about bad parenting

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<sup>255</sup> Anonymous, interview.

<sup>256</sup> King, interview.

<sup>257</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 7 May 1953, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.



and uncontrolled sexual behavior, they also differed from actions against gay bars. Combating juvenile delinquency did not require closing bars, as Lee's anti-vice campaign did. Actions against juvenile delinquency targeted a smaller group and did not require reforms.

Although Peterson did not direct action against gay bars or queers generally, public awareness of queer communities increased in the 1950s and 1960s. As Jennifer Terry explains, scientific and sociological studies of queers both informed and were influenced by social relations and cultural context. Many local governments responded to psychiatric, sociological, and popular discussions of queerness with crackdowns, and public condemnation of queers supported homophobic scientific interpretations. Generally, perceptions of queerness as illness and menace gained authority, but understandings of queerness as immorality and vice remained. For example, not all psychiatrists believed that sexual deviance was an illness, and psychiatric writing about queers in the 1950s and 1960s, despite a professed base in science, included moralism.<sup>259</sup> In Portland, perceptions of queer communities as growing and dangerous were not acted upon during Peterson's administration, but became important during Schrunck's campaign against gay bars and sexual deviance.

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<sup>258</sup> Portland City Club, "Public Welfare Section: Juvenile Delinquency in the Portland Area," *Portland City Club Bulletin* 28 (12 March 1948): 158-168.

<sup>259</sup> Escoffier, "Homosexuality," 250.



## Chapter 4: Terry Schrunk's Anti-Sexual Deviance Reform

Reform mayor Terry Schrunk tried to close gay bars as part of his effort to suppress sexual deviance and reshape Portland's downtown for economic growth. Reversing Peterson's inactivity concerning sexual deviance, Schrunk made suppression of gay bars central to his civic betterment campaign. Drawing on perceptions of increased queer public visibility, Schrunk linked gay bars, obscenity, and central city degradation. His condemnation of Portland's queer community occurred after his election and was intended to bolster his reform initiatives. Schrunk gained public, political, and business support for targeting gay bars by arguing that they harmed the city economically and socially. However, theories concerning sexual deviance and growing awareness, but confusion about minority groups' legal rights complicated the actions of a city council that was inclined to support Schrunk's leadership.

### Schrunk's Status as a Reformer

Schrunk's 1956 campaign for mayor focused on economic growth and a clean police department. His status as a reformer and opponent of vice was more ambiguous than Lee's, but he ran as a "clean" alternative to incumbent Fred Peterson. Promoting himself as a candidate for honest government, Schrunk's campaign posters read "End the Confusion."<sup>260</sup> He also championed active city government, unlike Portland's non-reform mayors.

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<sup>260</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 168.

Schrunk's supporters were not Portland's previous political and economic leaders. He enjoyed substantial popularity as county sheriff, his only prior elected position, and a former fireman, but was not a "backslapper in the style of George Baker or Earl Riley," in historian Carl Abbott's words.<sup>261</sup> Schrunk cooperated with and was supported by labor unions and a newer group of economic and political leaders, who advocated city growth through urban renewal and city center development. Long-established real estate and business owners, traditionally dominant in Portland politics, more often favored administrations that did not increase local taxes or regulations.<sup>262</sup> Schrunk, like Lee, advocated government reorganization for efficiency and accountability. However, rather than city manager government, a more fundamental change, he advocated merging city and county government.<sup>263</sup>

Schrunk, a Democrat, was aided by the growing popularity of the Democratic Party in Portland and Oregon, which had been dominated by the Republican Party since the Civil War.<sup>264</sup> Portland's mayoral campaigns were labeled non-partisan because candidates were not nominated by party, but affiliation was not wholly irrelevant. Former mayors Lee, Patterson, and Riley were Republicans. By 1956, the

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<sup>261</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 170.

<sup>262</sup> Uris, "Trouble in River City," 233.

<sup>263</sup> Karl Klooster, "City Hall Four-Term Terry Schrunk," *This Week*, 3 July 1985, Terry Schrunk biography file, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, and Carl Abbott, *Portland: Gateway to the Northwest* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1985), 127. A Portland Metropolitan Study Commission survey (Bardsley and Haslacher, Inc., 35) found that more citizens believed city-county consolidation would reduce rather than increase taxes, but the margin was small. This suggests that consolidation, less linked to tax increases than implementing city manager government, may have been a more popular reform, but lacked massive public support. Consolidation was not implemented during Schrunk's administration.

<sup>264</sup> Brent Walth, *Fire at Eden's Gate: Tom McCall and the Oregon Story* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1994), 74.

majority of Portland's voters registered as Democrats.<sup>265</sup> Historian Robert Burton credits the Democrats' increasing success to resolution of internal feuding, attractive new candidates, and the party's popular stance in favor of public power.<sup>266</sup> Democrats in Portland also benefited from changes in population and power. Portland's previous political and economic leaders became less powerful as Portland's population grew, particularly as young workers who came for defense industry jobs stayed and had children. Increasing numbers of younger families diminished the influence of disproportionately older voters who had dominated Portland's politics during the early and mid 1950s.<sup>267</sup> Younger voters were more likely to support active local government, such as city spending to improve job opportunities and "quality of life" issues.<sup>268</sup>

Schrunk used his previous office as sheriff to emphasize his commitment to strict law enforcement. Many citizens and historians believed that police and city government corruption increased during Peterson's administration, although newspapers and the legal system failed to offer conclusive evidence.<sup>269</sup> Proving corruption in local government and the police bureau was difficult because record keeping was irregular, facilitating efforts to conceal corruption and vice. City and police officials also could use their authority and public money to conceal illicit activities. Peterson's inaction against crime and vice was credited by opponents to

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<sup>265</sup> Uris, "Trouble in River City," 164.

<sup>266</sup> Richard Burton, *Democrats of Oregon: The Pattern of Minority Politics* (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1970), 124-135.

<sup>267</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Gateway*, 130.

<sup>268</sup> DeMarco, *A Short History*, 143.

<sup>269</sup> See Uris, Donnelly, and local newspapers for more information.

payoffs, and by supporters to a conservative political philosophy of government non-intervention and free enterprise. The *Oregonian*, a Republican newspaper, claimed “we do not know of a breath of scandal” concerning Peterson’s administration. The newspaper never “had occasion to question his sincerity and honesty.”<sup>270</sup> However, the *Oregon Journal* asserted that Schrunk should be elected “so that the situation can be cleaned up.”<sup>271</sup>

During the 1956 campaign, Peterson and Schrunk traded accusations of corruption and manipulation of vice control efforts for political gain in their positions as mayor and sheriff. A series of *Oregonian* articles claimed that Schrunk was backed by a conspiracy of union leaders and vice operators. The conspirators allegedly wanted to keep Portland open to gambling interests and engineer a takeover of local vice by outsiders from Chicago. Local vice figure Jim Elkins claimed that Schrunk had received a bribe in exchange for advance notification when he raided an after-hours club. The *Oregon Journal* discounted the stories, claiming that the *Oregonian* ignored collaboration between Elkins, Police Chief James Purcell, and Peterson.<sup>272</sup>

Peterson was not unpopular, but Schrunk, whose popularity and charisma made him “unbeatable” in Peterson’s estimation, won the election.<sup>273</sup> However, campaign allegations of corruption postponed Schrunk’s promises to clean up Portland. Based largely on the *Oregonian* allegations, the U.S. Senate called Schrunk

<sup>270</sup> *Oregonian*, “A City’s Thanks,” *Oregonian*, 29 December 1956, 8.

<sup>271</sup> *Oregon Journal*, “Schrunk Our Choice For Mayor,” *Oregon Journal*, 10 May 1960, Section 2, 5.

<sup>272</sup> See Robert Donnelly’s MA Thesis, “Postwar Vice Crime and Political Corruption in Portland,” for a thorough explanation of Peterson and Schrunk’s allegations and local newspapers’ responses.

<sup>273</sup> Karl Klooster, “City Hall: Four Years with Fred,” *This Week*, 16 February 1985, Fred Peterson biography file, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

and other Portland officials to testify at a national investigation of Teamster connections to organized vice. A local grand jury investigation followed the Senate hearings. The jury indicted many city officials, including Schrunk, but only convicted District Attorney William Langley. Purcell, Peterson's chief of police, was indicted for delinquency, incompetence, malfeasance in office, and failing to diligently prosecute gambling, prostitution, bootlegging, and bribery, but charges were dropped when he resigned from office.<sup>274</sup>

Schrunk was acquitted. Mary Tobkin, a member of Schrunk's staff, claimed that the public quickly forgot the allegations of corruption once the trial was over. "His acquittal had satisfied them," she asserted.<sup>275</sup> However, the trial hampered Schrunk's early anti-vice and civic betterment initiatives by diverting time and resources from his administration and the police bureau, and temporarily detracting from Schrunk's legitimacy as an anti-vice figure. Historian Joseph Uris's informants reported police pressure on witnesses to not testify against Schrunk. However, supporting evidence has not surfaced.<sup>276</sup> The police bureau's 1956 annual report admitted that vice enforcement had decreased slightly because of the grand jury investigation.<sup>277</sup>

### **Citizens' Receptiveness to Urban Reform and Vice Suppression**

Citizens generally accepted city actions against unpopular vice targets, such as gay bars, more easily than large-scale changes in Portland's political and economic

<sup>274</sup> Donnelly, "Postwar Vice Crime," 46.

<sup>275</sup> Mary Tobkin, interview by Linda Brody, 6 February 1981, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>276</sup> Uris, "Trouble in River City," 94.

<sup>277</sup> Portland Police Bureau, *Annual Report* (Portland, 1956).

structure. Neighborhood associations were often prominent opponents of city changes that did not benefit their own neighborhoods.<sup>278</sup> The publicity of the Senate hearings also influenced Portland's receptiveness to reform. Portlanders complained that the negative national exposure had damaged the city's reputation. However, according to Uris, many also believed that corruption and vice levels in the city were lower than the Senate claimed. This minimized calls for dramatic changes in the city, but increased desires to improve the city's reputation. Uris explains, "Many argue that the Senate Committee was decisive in turning people away from concern about the internal problems of Portland and toward concern for creating a positive, wholesome image for the city."<sup>279</sup> Neil Morgan, a California journalist, agreed that residents of Portland generally were "inclined to be insecure about the attitudes of others toward Portland."<sup>280</sup>

The fairly conservative majority of Portland's citizens also limited reform advocates' ability to make changes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. "Their virtues and their vices were suspended in a narrow middle range," wrote historian Dorothy Johansen, about Portland's citizens.<sup>281</sup> Historian Neal Pierce agreed, "if any West Coast city could be said to have a monopoly on propriety and an anxiousness of 'keep things as they are,' it is Portland, a town of quiet old wealth, discreet culture, and cautious politics."<sup>282</sup> Some historians also credit economic stagnation and the 1960

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<sup>278</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Gateway*, 139.

<sup>279</sup> Uris, "Trouble in River City," 223.

<sup>280</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 173.

<sup>281</sup> Dorothy Johansen and Charles Gates, *Empire of the Columbia: A History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 299.

<sup>282</sup> Quoted in Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 173.

census, which showed an unexpected 1,000 decrease in Portland's population, with increasing social conservatism. According to Neil Morgan, "Convinced by the census that she [Portland] had not succeeded, simply because she was not bigger, Portland longed for a return to the familiar and comforting pattern of austerity."<sup>283</sup>

Portland's economy grew more slowly than national averages in the 1950s. The city experienced a recession from 1958 to 1959, with little real estate activity and slumping downtown sales. Due partly to suburbanization, development on 82<sup>nd</sup> and 102<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and the construction of Lloyd Center, a major shopping mall located outside the central city, retail sales in the downtown area declined between 1948 and 1958 in dollar value.<sup>284</sup> The number of people travelling to the central city decreased by a third.<sup>285</sup> This recession encouraged politicians, voters, and business leaders to consider economic reforms, particularly concerning the central city, more favorably.

Theorist Sharon Zukin notes that economic distress and racial conflict often influence social support for gentrification and downtown reinvestment.<sup>286</sup> Concerns about queers, paired with recession, could also increase public support for economic and social reform of the central city. Reshaping Portland's downtown was less tied to racial conflict than in many other cities. This was partly due to migration of Chinese Americans away from the central city beginning in the early 1900s, and the location of the Albina district, with the highest residential and business concentrations of African

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<sup>283</sup> Neil Morgan, *Westward Tilt: The American West Today* (New York: Random House, 1961), 209-210.

<sup>284</sup> Abbott, *Portland: Planning*, 209-210.

<sup>285</sup> DeMarco, *A Short History*, 142.

<sup>286</sup> Sharon Zukin, "Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core," *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1987): 141.



Americans, east of the Willamette River. Many other cities' predominantly African American districts were located in the central city.<sup>287</sup> Zukin also notes, describing the role of historic preservation in legitimizing gentrification, that cultural validation can promote economic investment.<sup>288</sup> Replacing socially denigrated sites, like gay bars, with more socially respected businesses would give cultural validation to new investment in the central city.

Abbott describes Schrunk as a "business activist."<sup>289</sup> Like Peterson, his administration was oriented toward advancing business. Like Lee, he was an activist mayor who supported reform. However, he differed from both Peterson and Lee in effectively combining his reform and business objectives and winning support from the public, press, city council, and business leaders. Schrunk convinced local bankers and other business owners that urban renewal was a respectable and profitable investment that served their interests better than low-tax, low-regulation city government inactivity.<sup>290</sup> Urban renewal served business interests by providing commissions, increasing the city's tax yield, making land use patterns more profitable, and drawing additional investors and consumers to the city core.<sup>291</sup> Schrunk was also

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<sup>287</sup> Albina's location outside of downtown was encouraged by the lack of civil rights protections in Oregon well into the 1950s. Racial covenants in real estate codes prohibited many people of color from buying property in predominantly white neighborhoods. The public accommodations bill, which prohibited exclusion of people of color from public places, such as hotels and restaurants, was not passed until 1953. Economic renewal efforts outside of Portland's central city, particularly the later construction of Emmanuel hospital, did produce racial conflict

<sup>288</sup> Zukin, "Gentrification," 143.

<sup>289</sup> Abbott, *The New Urban America*, 163.

<sup>290</sup> Abbott, *The New Urban America*, 163.

<sup>291</sup> Uris, "Trouble in River City," 22, and Zukin, "Gentrification," 138.



able to convince taxpayers to support civic projects.<sup>292</sup> Trying to increase Portland's economy, Schrunk employed a number of local government initiatives, such as expanding the Port of Portland, housing projects, and mass transit. Suppressing vice and gay bars in the downtown area aided many of his economic goals, such as promoting new investment, visitors, and sales in the central city.<sup>293</sup>

### **Schrunk's Connection of Urban Reform, Sexual Deviance, and Public Health**

Schrunk promoted his urban reform and anti-sexual deviance initiatives by connecting them. He framed his campaign against sexual deviants as both part of his initiative to revitalize Portland's downtown and protecting Portland's traditions, health, and reputation. According to staff member Tobkin, Schrunk frequently used the catchphrase "this is a community of people and families and homes, and I want it to stay that way."<sup>294</sup> This resonated with residents of Portland, which, according to Johansen, "moved in 1965 as slowly and deliberately as it did in 1865, and there remains considerable sentiment, even on the part of newcomers to 'keep things as they are.'"<sup>295</sup>

Schrunk, according to the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest in the 1990s, "was perhaps the city's most homo unfriendly mayor."<sup>296</sup> Schrunk targeted Portland's queer community by trying to suppress gay bars and obscene literature and entertainment, issues that he presented as interconnected, invasive, and

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<sup>292</sup> Oregon Journal, "Terry Schrunk: Farm Boy to Fireman to Mayor of Portland," *Oregon Journal*, 4 March 1975, A2.

<sup>293</sup> Tobkin, interview.

<sup>294</sup> Tobkin, interview.

<sup>295</sup> Johansen and Gates, *Empire of the Columbia*, 564

<sup>296</sup> Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, "A Guide."

of high importance. He drew on popular misconceptions about queers, particularly fears that gay men recruited children, and portrayed gay bars as threatening Portland. “Homosexual activity is defended by some people as a fairly limited type of activity not affecting people to a large degree,” Schrunk stated, but “how can one defend homosexual activity when it preys upon young, innocent boys as victims for further activity? Unless new victims are obtained, homosexual activity in itself would be fairly limited or would disappear.”<sup>297</sup> Condemnation of gay bars and queer communities based on myths about recruitment of children was not limited to Portland. In San Francisco, for example, sensationalist newspapers also connected a perceived queer invasion of the city after World War II with old men who “prey largely not on their own kind but on the very young and the very innocent.” The newspapers called for police actions against gay bars and the development of psychiatric centers to address the perceived problem.<sup>298</sup>

Schrunk’s rhetoric and dire assessment of Portland’s queer community resonated with some citizens, who often commented on gay bars, sex crimes, and obscene literature and entertainment within the same letter to the mayor.<sup>299</sup> Newspaper articles and editorials also suggested that Portlanders believed that there were more queers in the city, that they were increasingly visible in public, and that this constituted a major threat to the city’s well being and reputation.<sup>300</sup> Politicians, police, and citizens used descriptions of a flood, inundation, and influx of queers and obscene

<sup>297</sup> Oregon Journal, “Smut Magazine,” 4.

<sup>298</sup> Boyd, ““Homos Invade S.F.!,””73.

<sup>299</sup> See Oregon Historical Society’s Schrunk papers, in the obscene literature folder, for letters from citizens.

literature to emphasize the overwhelming nature of the problem and its origin outside of Portland. For example, Pastor Herbert Anderson described “the flow of obscene literature flooding our community.”<sup>301</sup>

Newspaper articles and letters to Schrunk, stored at the Oregon Historical Society, indicated support for city action against sexual deviance. Joanne Lilleoren wrote to Schrunk, expressing her hope that the city would not permit “much more of this filth to be allowed in our restaurants, bars, taverns, clubs, etc... Isn’t there something that Portland can do to stop this infiltration of filth before it penetrates this city deeper than it already has?”<sup>302</sup> Noting that the police were “handicapped” by the lack of a state or city law making “even transvestitism illegal,” *Oregon Journal* columnist Doug Baker claimed that he had been contacted by a Portland businessman who asserted, “unless the mayor’s office took some decisive action soon to curb the public activities of the Unmentionables, he and businessmen of his acquaintance were going to take vigilante action of their own. ‘It’s getting so we can’t take our kids out in public without their seeing these People everywhere.’”<sup>303</sup> Most of Baker’s outrage was directed at public visibility, but his mention of transvestitism suggests that concern about gender transgression continued. Most of the mail Schrunk received praised his targeting of gay bars and obscenity, and called for increased restrictions.

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<sup>300</sup> See articles such as the *Oregonian*’s “They Prey on Boys” and Doug Baker’s “Baker’s Dozen.”

<sup>301</sup> Herbert Anderson, to Terry Schrunk, 26 March 1965, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>302</sup> Joanne Lilleoren, to Terry Schrunk, 12 August 1965, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>303</sup> Doug Baker, “Bakers Dozen: ‘Bluenoses’ Fix Policy in KATU-TV ‘Censorship,’” *Oregon Journal* 29 June 1964, 2.

### Schrunk's Initial Actions against Sexual Deviance

Local government action against gay bars had not occurred since Lee's administration in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Schrunk's anti-sexual deviance efforts were most intense from 1964 to 1965, but began with a series of smaller, less publicized actions in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Writer and gay bar customer William Holman thought that closer city scrutiny of gay bars began around 1961 and lasted for four or five years. For example, the top floor of the Harbor Club was closed because of allegations that too much weight was confined in the area.<sup>304</sup> Accounts of the Court of Transylvania, a predecessor to the Imperial Rose Court, a social and charitable queer organization, also suggested decreasing city tolerance. The court formed in 1958 at the Half Moon Tavern. The group elected a second queen in 1959, but according to Holman, "the winds of time were unkind," an oblique reference to increased city actions against gay bars. "Not until 1966 with the Pruitts of Portland did the community find itself again," he claimed, describing the easing of city and police efforts to suppress gay bars and organizations.<sup>305</sup>

The police department affirmed that it had increased enforcement against vice in 1961. The 1961 annual police report cited a doubling in sex offenses between 1960 and 1961, which may have reflected increases in arrests rather than incidents.<sup>306</sup> The report noted that the police bureau had suppressed larger amounts of obscene publications and movies. "Portland can be proud of its record of discouraging illicit

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<sup>304</sup> Holman, "A Gay History," 5.

<sup>305</sup> Eric Golding and Kimberlee Van Patten, "A History of the ISRC Monarchy," <http://www.rosecourt.org/history/Monarchy.htm>, 11 March 2002.

<sup>306</sup> Portland Police Bureau, *Annual Report* (Portland, 1961), 35.

traffic in the degradation of the youth and adults of this community,” the report summarized.<sup>307</sup>

Schrunk’s initiatives against obscene entertainment and literature, focusing particularly on downtown vendors, began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but peaked in 1964 and 1965. For example, Schrunk appointed the Mayor’s Committee for Decent Literature and Films in 1959. The committee was one of about 700 organizations formed nationally to promote censorship, legislation, and police enforcement of obscenity laws. Schrunk noted in 1964 that the committee’s work had “stepped up during the past months, due partly to the distribution of magazines and books which cater to the pervert.”<sup>308</sup> Schrunk ordered arrests of newsstand dealers of obscene paperbacks and promoted a theater pledge not to show obscene movies, which many theaters signed. Schrunk’s efforts to limit obscene entertainment, which he and others portrayed as invading Portland from other areas, included George Weiss’ extradition from New York to Multnomah County on the charge of disseminating obscene matter, the movie “Olga’s House of Shame.”<sup>309</sup>

Existing city regulations defined obscenity broadly. A Portland police code article stipulated that entertainment could be prohibited if “deemed to be indecent, immoral, obscene, suggestive, immodest,” presented “any gruesome, revolting or disgusting scenes or subjects,” or tended “to disturb the public peace” or “corrupt the public morals.” The article was amended in 1962 to include any printed matter that

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<sup>307</sup> Portland Police Bureau, *Annual Report*, 1961, 25.

<sup>308</sup> Terry Schrunk, to Virgil Shipley, 10 December 1964, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, and Del Martin, “Perversion of Freedom,” *The Ladder* 5 (November 1960): 4.

“to average persons applying the contemporary standards of this community has a predominant [sic] appeal to prurient interest, that is, a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex or excretion, and which, in addition, goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor.”<sup>310</sup> Schrunk also filed an ordinance amending the Police Code to prohibit minors from working in establishments where liquor was sold to the public and drafted a law prohibiting nudity and entertainers with “abbreviated” costume.<sup>311</sup>

Schrunk included publications by early gay rights groups in his categorization of obscene literature. *One* magazine, for example, was sold under the counter. Schrunk claimed that gay and lesbian magazines were entering Portland from “across the country, that encourage the weak-minded in our community, the weak-willed, to follow in this type of footsteps.”<sup>312</sup> Schrunk’s condemnation of early gay rights magazines was not uncommon. The Daughters of Bilitis and Mattachine Society, early gay rights groups, faced attacks from San Francisco’s 1959 mayoral candidates for publishing “smut.”<sup>313</sup> The Los Angeles Postmaster seized 3,000 copies of *One* magazine in 1954, claiming that it was “obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy.” Editors of the magazine took the decision to court and won. According to Dorr Legg, an early gay rights leader, “until then homosexuality could only be discussed as sin, pathology,

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<sup>309</sup> Office of the District Attorney for Multnomah County, Press Release, 29 November 1965, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>310</sup> City of Portland, Police Code, 16-3002, 16-3201.

<sup>311</sup> Terry Schrunk, to Mrs. Stanley Keil, 23 November 1965, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>312</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 24 October 1964, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

<sup>313</sup> Del Martin, “Only the Beginning,” *The Ladder* 5 (October 1960): 5.

or criminal behavior.”<sup>314</sup> Arguments that sexual deviance was acceptable or not immoral were legally labeled obscene.<sup>315</sup>

Schrunk suppressed obscenity in conjunction with his anti-sexual deviance and civic betterment initiatives by arguing that obscene literature caused a variety of social problems for the city. He included queers, juvenile crime, venereal disease, illegitimacy, and disrespect for laws and authority as products of obscenity.

“Obscenity and perversion prey on the minds of the physically immature, emotionally disturbed and psychologically insecure, and the corruption it breeds becomes a serious social and financial public burden,” said Schrunk.<sup>316</sup> He argued that there was “a definite correlation between the availability of this printed poison and the percent of increase in homo-sexual activity.”<sup>317</sup> Schrunk emphasized the role of pornography in turning young people into sexual deviants. He condemned downtown businesses where “young people can purchase vile and disgusting volumes which are nothing short of practicing handbooks in crime and perversion.”<sup>318</sup> Portland police officers also described “smut magazines” as “triggering devices” for luring young men into queer behavior.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Cook, “OSU Professor,” 1.

<sup>315</sup> For one area of study on the classification of gay rights arguments as obscene, see works on Radclyffe Hall and *The Well of Loneliness*, such as *Radclyffe Hall: A Case of Obscenity?*, by Vera Brittain (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1969).

<sup>316</sup> Terry Schrunk, to Chairman Mahoney and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 12 May 1965, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>317</sup> Schrunk, letter to Shipley.

<sup>318</sup> Oregon Journal, “Mayor Calls for New ‘Smut War,’” *Oregon Journal*, 1 November 1969, 4.

<sup>319</sup> Oregon Journal, “Smut Magazine,” 4.

### Schrunk's Central City Crackdown

Schrunk presented both his anti-sexual deviance and urban renewal efforts as public health initiatives. For example, Schrunk announced that the public sale of obscene literature was “cancer in our community.”<sup>320</sup> His use of disease metaphors promoted perception and treatment of queers and low-income areas as potentially contagious. According to Chris Sawyer, who writes about Schrunk's impact on low-income men and buildings in Portland's “skid row,” city officials and business leaders perceived poor neighborhoods near the city's center as “blighted areas as not only ugly and uneconomic, but as infectious neighborhoods which must be excised for the public good.”<sup>321</sup> Portland's skid row, according to Sawyer, was larger than average and by the 1960s vacancies in the area, perceived as disincentives to economic investment, were highly visible.<sup>322</sup> In 1963, Schrunk ordered a crackdown on liquor and other violations on lower West Burnside. He urged Chief David Johnson to increase arrests in “problem spots” and to report violations to OLCC.<sup>323</sup> Portland's police further increased their patrol activity in the central precinct after Schrunk promoted Donald McNamara to chief of police in 1964. Police officers were ordered, in Officer Brad Purcell's words, to “clean up the area,” with increased patrols and arrests, particularly in the central city area and around Burnside.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> *Oregonian*, “They Prey on Boys,” 10.

<sup>321</sup> Chris Sawyer, “From Whitechapel to Old Town: The Life and Death of the Skid Row District Portland, Oregon” (Ph.D. diss., Portland State University, 1985), 423.

<sup>322</sup> Sawyer, “From Whitechapel to Old Town,” 252, 490.

<sup>323</sup> *Oregonian*, “Mayor Calls for Arrests,” *Oregonian*, 14 December 1963, 8.

<sup>324</sup> Brad Purcell, to P.R. Carr, August 1964, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.



Portland's gay bars clustered in low-income and high-crime areas in the central city. City officials claimed that gay bars and high crime areas drained city resources and discouraged more lucrative business investments and visitors to downtown.<sup>325</sup> The concentration of gay bars in high crime, central city areas was common in cities throughout the U.S., because social disapproval discouraged high profile locations.<sup>326</sup> This also encouraged bars with both prostitute and queer customers, such as Portland's Old Glory Restaurant.

Class influenced the location of Portland's gay bars less than historians have found in some other cities. Roey Thorpe notes that class often affected the locations and presentations of white lesbian bars in Detroit. Middle-class lesbians valued privacy more highly than working-class lesbians and used different expressions of gendered and sexual identity. For example, she notes that working-class lesbians were more likely to value fighting and swearing as components of butch identities than middle-class lesbians. Willingness to fight was important in high-crime locations and in limiting harassment from non-queer men.<sup>327</sup> Portland gay bar owner Ric King remembered that "street taunting in front of bars occurred and gay-bashing did happen."<sup>328</sup> Portland's gay bars varied widely in presentation and clientele. The

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<sup>325</sup> The Portland Planning Commission divided central city "commercial blight," defined as "disease that results in the withering, cessation of growth," into different types of perceived economic disincentives. Although the commission did not give specific examples, gay bars may have been classified as "environmental blight," described as "the presence of elements in commercial areas which decrease the efficiency of these areas." (Portland City Planning Commission, *Portland's Commercial Areas: An Initial Appraisal of Blight and Related Factors* [October 1966], 5, 8.)

<sup>326</sup> David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1995), 12.

<sup>327</sup> Roey Thorpe, "The Changing Face of Lesbian Bars in Detroit, 1938-1965," in *Creating a Place for Ourselves* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 177.

<sup>328</sup> King, interview.

Model Inn, for example, reportedly attracted a tough crowd of butch and femme women, did not welcome men, and often hosted bar fights, both between lesbian customers and between lesbians and heterosexual men. "That was rare, you know, for a woman to be able to beat up a man," remembered customer Patti May.<sup>329</sup> While the Model Inn's chairs were unanchored car seats, Derek's Tavern was noted by the Portland police department to be "frequented by homosexuals of higher class and means."<sup>330</sup> However, despite differences in clientele and presentation, Portland's gay bars varied little in location.

In addition to Schrank's mandate to clean up "problem spots" in the central city, there was a perception that queers were spreading outside of their expected locations. Gay bars concentrated in three central city areas. The waterfront and Burnside Street historically were considered disreputable areas and expected to contain high levels of vice, while Yamhill and Alder Street near Third Avenue was a mixed location. Referring to the area near Yamhill, Holman argues that "The Tavern Harbor area was beginning to swell into a blemish more potent and alarming than the pock-marked river bank or Burnside pimple. As long as the blemish remained collected along the waterfront, self-contained, the rest of Rose City chose to leave it alone."<sup>331</sup> While the Harbor Club was located in the Yamhill area during the early 1950s, more primarily gay and mixed bars located nearby in the 1960s. For example, the Half Moon moved slightly closer, and the Other Inn and Dahl and Penne became

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<sup>329</sup> Walton, Paper, 1 December 2000, Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, 5.

<sup>330</sup> Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest and Phil Staley and Dennis Burkart, "Gay History of Portland," 7 August 1994, from Larry Wormington's files.

gay-dominated in the early 1960s. A few blocks away, in the early 1960s, were Mama Bernice's, Dinty Moore's, and mixed bars like the Reed, Rose City Tavern, and Lotus. Customers remembered often visiting three or four nearby bars in a night.<sup>332</sup>

When more gay bars began operating in the Yamhill area, further away from the river and Burnside, concern about isolating them from "respectable" citizens grew. For example, resident Harry Sachtler noted that he and his wife saw "all kinds of despicable, vulgar characters leering at us," around Fourth Avenue and Yamhill Street.<sup>333</sup> Politicians and business interests suggested that visible queer locations might discourage shoppers and visitors to Portland's downtown. Concern about the lack of containment of queers was also illustrated in an *Oregon Journal* article about a woman "propositioned" while shopping for gloves at a department store downtown. The article expressed indignation, noting that the district attorney rebuffed the woman when she wanted to press charges, because he assumed that she was in a disreputable area. He reportedly chastised "if you don't want to meet such people, stay out of the places where they congregate" before learning that the woman was in a department store.<sup>334</sup> Journalists and citizens expressed fears that queer people were spreading beyond high-crime areas near the waterfront and Burnside, and into middle-class and wealthy areas in the heart of downtown.

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<sup>331</sup> Holman, "A Gay History," 4.

<sup>332</sup> Anonymous, interview.

<sup>333</sup> Harry Sachtler, to Terry Schunk, 6 November 1964, Terry Schunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>334</sup> Baker, "Baker's Dozen," 2.

### **Police Policy Changes from Containment to Suppression**

During the early 1960s, Portland's police bureau recommended a policy of containment of gay bars. Containment drew on Cold War foreign and domestic ideology and medical models of contagion. The bureau argued that it was better to concentrate sexual deviants in known locations where they could be isolated and watched by the police, particularly in disreputable neighborhoods where they were less likely to harm respectable citizens and families. Council member Stanley Earl had planned to initiate a motion to revoke the Harbor Club's license in the early 1960s. However, the police asked him to leave the bar open, because closing gay bars only "spreads them around the city," in Earl's words.<sup>335</sup> The council and police did not try to close gay bars until 1964. Portland did not invent the strategy of containment. Many cities, throughout the century, contained prostitution in "red light" districts, and Miami's police also advocated containment of gay bars in the 1950s.<sup>336</sup>

Containment, while limiting official city and police action against gay bars, did not prohibit police or OLCC officials from patrolling and making arrests. Portland's vice division sent undercover agents to gay bars. For example, the police, Norm Costa remembered, "would troll, and what troll means is that they would hang their dicks out trying to get somebody to latch on them and then they'd arrest them."<sup>337</sup> Police officers also questioned gay bar customers after highly publicized sex crimes, because of the imagined link between queers and crimes against children. For example, following the murder of a child in 1963, the sheriff's office announced that it had

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<sup>335</sup> Oregon Journal, "OLCC Overrides Ban on Six Taverns," *Oregon Journal*, 18 December 1964, 1.

interrogated “more than 100 known sex offenders and deviates living in the approximate area.”<sup>338</sup> This probably included police intrusions into gay bars.

Denver politicians also debated the merits of containment compared to suppression, but the policy debates were less meaningful because continuous heavy police harassment led to frequent gay bar turnover.<sup>339</sup> Although gay bars in Portland were sometimes renamed, and turnover was steady, other bars lasted for long periods, such as the Harbor Club. This suggests that Portland’s use of containment, and comparatively unexceptional levels of police harassment, were important in facilitating the constant operation of gay bars in the city.

In 1964, Portland’s police bureau recommended a change in city policy toward gay bars, from containment to suppression. The bureau cited increases in the size and public presence of Portland’s queer community. The most important factor driving the policy change, according to Lieutenant Crawford, was “the fact that they have become more brazen all the time in their activities, as you all know,” although “why they want to get out in public, I don’t know.”<sup>340</sup> Police departments in other U.S. cities also described increasingly public queer behavior. For example, Los Angeles Inspector James Fisk argued that despite arrests of queers, “We’re barely touching the surface of the problem... The pervert is no longer as secretive as he was.”<sup>341</sup> A 1964 *Oregon Journal* article agreed, “The Unmentionable People are virtually untouchable people

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<sup>336</sup> Fejes, “Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic,” 316.

<sup>337</sup> Costa, interview.

<sup>338</sup> *Oregonian*, “Deviates Free to Roam,” 10.

<sup>339</sup> Thomas Noel, “Gay Bars and the Emergence of the Denver Homosexual Community,” *Social Science Journal* 15 (April 1978): 61-69.

<sup>340</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

and they are growing stronger each week, both in numbers and the brazenness with which they flaunt their abnormality.”<sup>342</sup> Terming queers “unmentionable” was ironic, considering the dramatic growth of discussions of queerness.

Schrunk’s 1964 promotion of Donald McNamara to chief of police may have encouraged the change in police policy. Schrunk instructed McNamara to reorganize the bureau to increase law enforcement and, implicitly, not to tolerate corruption. “There are no ‘sacred cows’ in Portland,” Schrunk noted. “I do not expect the Police Bureau to be a political machine for me or for any other person.”<sup>343</sup> A 1967 survey found that 85 percent of officers considered vice control, which included gay bars, important.<sup>344</sup> Confirming that police officers in the 1960s considered sexual deviants threatening, they ranked them the fourth greatest potential danger to the community.<sup>345</sup>

### **City Council Debates on Closing Gay Bars**

Portland’s police bureau tried to close gay bars by sending negative evaluations to the 1964 city council hearings on liquor license renewals for the Model Inn, Mama Bernice’s, Milwaukee Tavern, Harbor Club, Half Moon Tavern, Old Glory Restaurant, Derek’s Tavern, and the Transfusion Inn. The targeted gay bars were all in the central city, while neighborhood taverns east of downtown with gay customers were not mentioned. This suggests that the change in policy concerning gay bars was linked to efforts to clean up the central city. The bureau’s selection of gay bars was

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<sup>341</sup> Welch, “Homosexuality in America,” 67.

<sup>342</sup> Cook, “Portland’s Gay Bars.”

<sup>343</sup> Terry Schrunk, to Donald McNamara, 21 July 1964, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>344</sup> Gervais, “The Portland Police Officer,” 132.

<sup>345</sup> Gervais, “The Portland Police Officer,” 180.

also somewhat arbitrary. The Old Glory was as well known for prostitutes as for queer customers. The Dahl and Penne tavern had a mixed clientele, hosted drag shows, and received prominent mention in many gay bar customers' recollections, but was not included in the 1964 council debates.<sup>346</sup>

The police acknowledged that the bars, other than serving a queer clientele, were law-abiding operations and that the owners had generally cooperated with the bureau.<sup>347</sup> For example, Derek's only recorded violation before the liquor license debate was a brief suspension in 1963 for after-hours service. However, in Lieutenant Crawford's words, "the point is not operation. Derek's and the Half Moon are as well operated as any in the city- or better."<sup>348</sup> The issue was explicitly gay bars' queer customers.

The council took the police recommendations seriously and debated at length whether to send negative city evaluations to the OLCC. Councilors listened to and argued with police representatives, lawyers, and gay bar owners at a series of regularly scheduled meetings during November and December of 1964. Very few unqualified queer rights arguments surfaced, but groups disagreed considerably about appropriate city policy toward gay bars.

Councilors and supportive media coverage, often replicating council rhetoric, cited gay bars as both a sign and cause of Portland's increasing queer population. The *Oregon Journal* claimed that Portland's gay bars were "encouraging their [queers']

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<sup>346</sup> Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, "A Guide," and interviews with Susie Shepard, King, and anonymous.

<sup>347</sup> *Oregonian*, "Council Mulls Treatment of Bars where Unsavory Characters Gather," *Oregonian*, 4 December 1964, 21.



trade.”<sup>349</sup> The *Oregonian* noted that the council’s debates about gay bars were initiated because they were “afraid the situation may get out of hand.”<sup>350</sup> Councilor Grayson argued that there were nine gay bars in Portland, Lieutenant Crawford claimed eight, while Derek Akerson, owner of Derek’s Tavern, countered that there were only two “strict” gay bars and two “strictly girl taverns.” The actual number of gay bars was debatable, depending on whether mixed-customer bars were counted. However, the contention that the number and presence of gay bars and queers in Portland had grown dramatically was shared by police, city councilors, newspapers, and citizens. “Either they’re growing in number or I’m just seeing a lot more of them,” reported a Portland police officer.<sup>351</sup> It is possible that, prompted by Portland’s recession and diminished revenue after the city’s crackdown on gambling, bar operators increasingly welcomed queer customers as they struggled to find new sources of revenue. According to Bud Clark, Portland taverns during the 1960s “began experimenting with new strategies to reestablish solvency after the demise of gambling.”<sup>352</sup> Clark, however, refers to changes in food and entertainment.

Although gay bars may or may not have actually been increasing in number, other motivations were important in descriptions of their growth. Gay bars facilitated queer public presence and group identity. The *Oregonian* noted that when bars became known as gay, non-queers usually stopped patronizing the establishment,

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<sup>348</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>349</sup> Oregon Journal, “OLCC Overrides Ban,” 1.

<sup>350</sup> Oregonian, “Council Mulls Treatment,” 21.

<sup>351</sup> Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” 2.

<sup>352</sup> Clark, “Taverns in My Life,” 6.



resulting in more “open and extreme” queer behavior.<sup>353</sup> Concern about the role of gay bars in facilitating displays of queer behavior in reputable areas may have been driven by concerns that queers were becoming less stigmatized. Fejes argues that the primary goal of anti-gay bar campaigns in Miami was not to close bars and drive queer people away, but instead to stigmatize homosexuality.<sup>354</sup> This argument was supported by Portland councilors’ acknowledgement that regardless of what action they decided upon, gay bars would continue to exist in the city. For example, Councilor Grayson admitted “We have had them since time... There is no question about that; we will continue to have” gay bars.<sup>355</sup>

### **Blaming Queer Migrants**

“They dress like men, act like men, and are believed to be from areas outside Portland,” claimed a police report on lesbian customers of the Milwaukee Tavern.<sup>356</sup> Residents, newspapers, and police and city officials blamed increasing queer presence in Portland on outsiders, particularly Californians. Blaming outsiders was influenced by concerns about growth and migration. Although Portland’s population grew comparatively slowly in the late 1950s, Oregon’s population doubled between 1952 and 1967. This resulted in concerns about economic stagnation in the city at the same time that politicians and citizens increasingly complained about environmental degradation and crowding in outdoor recreation in Oregon. In the words of the *Oregonian*, “Oregonians found themselves crowded out of their own state

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<sup>353</sup> *Oregonian*, “Council Mulls Treatment,” 21.

<sup>354</sup> Fejes, “Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic,” 342.

<sup>355</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>356</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

campgrounds, mainly by Californians. Oregonians were advised not to drink, swim, or fish in the Willamette River because it had become an industrial toilet.”<sup>357</sup> Portland resident Virgil Shipley informed Schrunk, “I am pleased you are trying to control the flood of homosexuals from San Francisco, and supporting police efforts to stop these people from ganging up at our local beach resorts.”<sup>358</sup> Gay bars were repeatedly termed “resorts,” emphasizing their decadence and role in attracting immoral outsiders to Oregon.<sup>359</sup> This informed citizen arguments such as Oregon resident Charles White’s statement that “Oregon should not become a playground for these kinds of people.”<sup>360</sup>

In addition to concerns about growth and migration, there was a long-standing myth that immoral people lived in California. An old story described a branch in the Oregon Trail. The way to California was marked with a pile of gold quartz, drawing rough fortune-seekers, while Oregon’s sign was written, attracting literate people. Although the story was most likely untrue, the first major white group of Oregon settlers were missionaries, establishing a more conservative state reputation than California.<sup>361</sup> Articles about queers and gay rights groups in San Francisco and Los Angeles reinforced California’s less conservative reputation.

Events in San Francisco shaped Portland’s debates about gay bars. Presenting queers as an invasive threat to Portland’s traditional decency, Schrunk claimed that the

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<sup>357</sup> Oregonian, *The Oregon Story*, 105.

<sup>358</sup> Virgil Shipley, to Terry Schrunk, received 7 December 1964, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>359</sup> Oregonian, “Council Mulls Treatment,” 21.

<sup>360</sup> Cook, “The History of Oregon’s Sodomy Laws.”

<sup>361</sup> O’Donnell and Vaughan, *Portland*, 62.

city suffered from little vice. He noted that Portland was judged the cleanest city in America by an undercover survey of organized vice. However, he warned that many “undesirables” were entering the city because of San Francisco’s crackdown on gay bars.<sup>362</sup> Schrunk claimed that liquor control officials in San Francisco had informed him that they were taking measures to revoke gay bars’ liquor licenses.<sup>363</sup> Police reports also blamed increases in gay bars in Portland on “an influx of homosexuals” from San Francisco after police and local authorities had closed many gay bars.<sup>364</sup> Sergeant Waddell warned that San Francisco’s police “made it a little bit warm for them there... but Portland is becoming a small San Francisco in that respect.”<sup>365</sup>

Nationally, news of local governments’ crackdowns encouraged similar responses in other cities. “As refugees from these local crackdowns and from federal and military purges looked for safer harbors, city after city imagined that an ‘invasion of homosexuals’ was turning it into the homosexual capital of America,” writes historian Allan Berube.<sup>366</sup> Cities were anxious not to appear welcoming of queers. For example, in Miami, legislators tried to change sex criminal laws to “undo the impression created by ONE magazine that Miami was a welcoming place for homosexuals to gather and police officially allowed bars for homosexuals to operate,” according to Fejes.<sup>367</sup> Similarly, councilors and attorneys in Portland discussed an

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<sup>362</sup> Oregon Journal, “OLCC Overrides Ban,” 1.

<sup>363</sup> Oregon Journal, “OLCC Overrides Ban,” 1.

<sup>364</sup> Oregonian, “OLCC Overrides City, Issues Licenses to Six Portland Taverns,” *Oregonian*, 18 December 1964, 28.

<sup>365</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>366</sup> Allan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 270.

<sup>367</sup> Fejes, “Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic,” 335.

unnamed publication, probably the Mattachine Society's guide to gay bars, that was encouraging "a whole flock of them," in Councilor Grayson's words, to come to Portland.<sup>368</sup>

Portland's council, police, and media argued that city policy should encourage queers to leave Portland, discourage others from coming, and strengthen Portland's reputation as intolerant of queerness. Sergeant Waddell claimed that unfavorable liquor license recommendations would serve as "a lot of unofficial suggestions that they leave town."<sup>369</sup> "It is no credit to a city to provide such a haven and places of enticement," cautioned the *Oregonian*.<sup>370</sup> Similarly, Miami police argued "if we can discourage bars and night clubs from catering to this type of trade, perhaps these undesirables will leave town."<sup>371</sup>

Historian Nan Boyd argues that San Francisco's reputation as tolerant and home to a large queer community did attract queer tourists and migrants.<sup>372</sup> However, lacking a reputation as a queer center, this did not apply to Portland. Jim Damis, the attorney for Derek's Tavern, argued against claims that Portland's laxness had drawn queer migrants from other cities. "Oregon, or Portland, has not been flooded by homosexuals. It is know [sic] as a pretty tight town for homosexuals," he claimed. He compared the number of Portland's gay bars to San Francisco's "forty such bars."<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>369</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>370</sup> *Oregonian*, "City, State at Odds," *Oregonian*, 12 January 1965, 14.

<sup>371</sup> Fejes, "Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic," 327.

<sup>372</sup> Boyd, "Homos Invade S.F.!", 74.

<sup>373</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

## Legal Defenses

The council debates included early legal defenses of queer communities. Gay bars' lawyers' acceptance of queers was not wholehearted, but they argued against city actions to suppress them. For example, Attorney Lee Puckett asserted that "these people, undesirable as they may be still have a right to consume alcoholic beverages."<sup>374</sup> Confusion in both the arguments of attorneys and councilors show that increased discussion and court rulings concerning queers had raised the possibility of queer rights, but had not yet produced definite rules, expectations, or acceptance.

Lawyers for gay bars often made "the most salient plea for the homosexuals' civil rights," wrote Achilles in the 1960s.<sup>375</sup> The presence of lawyers for Portland's gay bars was in itself a sign of increased awareness of legal limits to city actions against queers. Attorneys did not represent gay bar owners during Lee's administration, for example. City Attorney Alexander Brown advised the council during the 1964-65 debates about gay bars. Brown warned the council that because of recent Supreme Court rulings supporting civil rights, he doubted that the council could deny the bars' liquor licenses without proof of legal violations.<sup>376</sup>

Attorneys for gay bar owners during Portland's council debates raised a variety of legal issues, including constitutionality. Attorney Jim Damis argued that the ramifications of the council decision included "the constitutional rights of both the homosexuals and the tavern owner, the privilege of immunity from prosecution, the right of peaceful assembly." Haslett, representing the Model Inn, also questioned the

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<sup>374</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

constitutionality of denying gay bars' liquor licenses. Except for Damis, the lawyers and councilors remained vague about which constitutional guarantees were at stake and whether they were more concerned about the rights of gay bar owners or customers.

Schrunk argued that supporting queer legal rights hurt the public. He claimed that gay bars should be closed because queers were converting young people with pornography. He did not make his logic explicit in connecting gay bars with obscene publications, but announced, "This is something that should arouse the public indignation. I don't appreciate some of the filth that is being peddled to lead the youngsters, some of the magazines published by the homosexuals."<sup>377</sup> According to the *Oregon Journal*, "most of the council believed that establishments in question were an 'offense against the public'" because they were locations where queers congregated.<sup>378</sup> Even gay bar attorney Damis agreed that gay bars conflicted with the right of society to be protected from queers. However, Damis argued that queers would not decrease by closing bars and that the issue of public protection was therefore negated, leaving only the issue of the rights of bar owners to serve queers.<sup>379</sup>

Council members also argued that gay bars hurt the public by depleting tax funds. They cited police reports that claimed each gay bar required "as much as five hours a night" of police "manpower to control."<sup>380</sup> Councilor Bowes argued that when

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<sup>375</sup> Achilles, "The Homosexual Bar," 61.

<sup>376</sup> *Oregonian*, "OLCC Overrides City," 28.

<sup>377</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>378</sup> *Oregon Journal*, "OLCC Overrides Ban," 1.

<sup>379</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>380</sup> *Oregon Journal*, "OLCC Overrides Ban," 1.

owners kicked customers out of gay bars onto the street they further damaged the public by making queers the city and police's responsibility. He characterized this as an unfair action burdening taxpayers.<sup>381</sup> Historian Gordon Dodds describes, about Oregon, "citizens' fear of change that could not or was not presented in taxsaving terms."<sup>382</sup> The council encouraged public support for a change in city policy by presenting actions against gay bars as taxsaving measures.

In the absence of a contemporary U.S. Supreme Court decision about gay bars, the council and attorneys considered precedents set in California. Damis cited the 1958 California appellate court decision in *Tarbox v. Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles*. The court ruled that a queer customer base was not sufficient cause to deny business licenses. The decision stipulated that Tarbox, a theater owner, "could not legally refuse admission to any person even though he knew him to be a homosexual unless that person had theretofore committed a lewd act upon the premise."<sup>383</sup> Using this decision, Damis defended Derek's queer customer base by explaining that the owners neither "encourage and cater to" nor "throw homosexuals out of the tavern. It would probably be against the law to do so."<sup>384</sup>

Although Damis was the only lawyer to specifically cite the Tarbox case, other gay bar owners and attorneys drew on this defense, arguing that their clientele was not solicited, but instead determined by their location. Puckett claimed that Harbor Club owner Johnnie Honegger did not seek out queer customers but "there are these people

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<sup>381</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 10 December 1964, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

<sup>382</sup> Dodds, *The American Northwest*, 322.

<sup>383</sup> George Painter, "The Sensibilities of our Forefathers: the History of Sodomy Laws in the United States," <http://www.geocities.com/privacylaws/sensibilities/california.htm>, 25 April 2002.



who are coming to this tavern and others in the particular neighborhood.” He described the neighborhood as “blighted.”<sup>385</sup> Milton Buck pleaded “it’s a bearcat of a location” in defense of his tavern, the Transfusion Inn. The Transfusion was a “rather run-down looking” gay bar close to the western base of the Hawthorne bridge.<sup>386</sup> The police labeled it “one of our biggest problems” because of queers, prostitutes, and arrests.<sup>387</sup>

The condemnation of location was also racially based. Lawyers, police officers, and councilors assumed that respectable bar locations would not include people of color. For example, W.F. Whitely, representing the Old Glory, noted that its location near the riverfront was “probably not the finest end of town,” particularly because it was not racially segregated.<sup>388</sup> Sergeant Waddell drew council attention to an encounter with three African-American men dressed as women, two of whom were from San Francisco, to illustrate the problem of public queer presence in Portland.<sup>389</sup> The men’s dress and status as Californians appeared more deviant to Waddell because of their race. Historian Joseph Uris argues that Portland’s police officers were less likely to tolerate integrated vice establishments.<sup>390</sup> While the police noticed and emphasized race, it did not seem to lead to different police treatment of gay bars. The gay bars targeted for negative liquor license recommendations included both mixed

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<sup>384</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>385</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>386</sup> Cook, “Portland’s Gay Bars,” and Portland City Council, Minutes, 24 December 1964.

<sup>387</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 24 December 1964.

<sup>388</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>389</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>390</sup> Uris, “Trouble in River City,” 164.



and informally segregated locations. Similarly, gay bar owner Ric King did not report particular harassment based on integrated customers.<sup>391</sup>

Many of Portland's bars, queer and non-queer, were informally segregated. "It was just an unwritten rule," explained gay bar customer Norm Costa, "the black community stayed pretty much within the black community."<sup>392</sup> Ric King remembered that gay neighborhood taverns served mostly white customers, but a few men of color were accepted either because of their white partners or status as drag performers. For example, the Jamboree Room "integrated neighborhood blacks into the mix because of my black partner," King explained. He recalled few Asian American or Native American gay bar customers, despite their presence in the city, which may have been generally accurate or skewed by his own choice of taverns. "Blacks were the most visible," according to King, "but all colors were rare in public gay scene." King argued that queer Asian Americans were less likely to attend gay bars downtown or in predominantly white neighborhoods, and more likely to patronize neighborhood taverns owned by Asian Americans.<sup>393</sup> Brett Beemyn similarly argues that gay men of color in Washington were more likely to go to parties or bars within their own communities.<sup>394</sup> Gay bars were racially segregated in many cities. In Roey Thorpe's study of Detroit, many African American respondents remembered that

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<sup>391</sup> King, interview.

<sup>392</sup> Costa, interview.

<sup>393</sup> King, interview.

<sup>394</sup> Brett Beemyn, "A Queer Capital: Race, Class, Gender, and the Changing Social Landscape of Washington's Gay Communities, 1940-1955," in *Creating a Place for Ourselves: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community Histories* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 202.

white lesbians discouraged lesbians of color from patronizing the same lesbian bars.<sup>395</sup>

Kennedy and Davis argue, however, that African American lesbians began desegregating gay bars in Buffalo in the 1950s.<sup>396</sup> Estelle Freedman also describes integrated lesbian bars in the 1950s.<sup>397</sup>

By emphasizing the perceived disreputability of Portland's gay bar locations, some of the attorneys implicitly promoted the previous police strategy of containment. Haslett asked the council, "is it better that homosexuals congregate in a few establishments, or is it better for the citizens of Portland that they infiltrate and disseminate in all the establishments, where my family and other families might enter..."<sup>398</sup> Damis also pointed out that gay bars were beneficial because police "know where to go when they are looking for a known homosexual."<sup>399</sup>

Council member Ormond Bean fought proponents of containment by labeling himself an opponent of "appeasement." In this Cold War analogy, gay bar customers were compared to Communists. Those who opposed appeasement argued that negotiating with Communists, or queers in Bean's analogy, would only increase their demands and broaden their influence. Bean claimed that containment allowed Portland's queer community to gather in gay bars without official city opposition or suppressive efforts, and that this was dangerous and immoral. He argued that the debates should not be about whether techniques such as containment were effective, but instead the "old question" of whether Portland's government should operate the

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<sup>395</sup> Thorpe, "The Changing Face," 166.

<sup>396</sup> Kennedy and Davis, *Boots of Leather*, 113.

<sup>397</sup> Freedman, "The Historical Construction," 42.

<sup>398</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 10 December 1964.

city “wide open, or suppression.”<sup>400</sup> However, he was unable to convince other council members, police, or attorneys to redefine the debate as a simpler matter of suppressing or permitting criminality and immorality, such as the discussion of gay bars during Lee’s administration. The construction of gay bars as simple immorality was less compelling in the 1960s, after the profusion of psychiatric and expert suggestions on treatment of sexual deviance as an illness and shifting definitions of sexual morality.

Gay bar attorneys also used theories that queerness was a form of illness in their defense of gay bars. Lonergan, defending the Milwaukee Tavern, asked the council not to connect the “entirely medical problem” of homosexuality with liquor licensing.<sup>401</sup> Damis cited contemporary psychiatric and sociological theory, including the *Problem of Homosexuality*, *Wolfender Report*, and *Bieber Report*.<sup>402</sup> He argued that these works’ theories about the nature and causes of homosexuality proved that gay bars did not put the public at high risk, because bad parenting caused queerness. “If you have a normal parent, just one, you can not have a homosexual boy. A normal boy cannot be seduced into homosexuality... I don’t understand it, but the psychiatrist does,” said Damis.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>400</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>401</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>402</sup> The Wolfender Report, published in England in 1957, supported legalization of homosexuality. Irving Bieber’s *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study* located the cause of homosexuality in bad parenting. The *Problem of Homosexuality*, edited by Charles Berg in 1958, was a collection of essays by both psychiatrists and self-identified gay men and lesbians, which advanced various theories about the cause of homosexuality.

<sup>403</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

Medical explanations of queerness were generally of mixed effectiveness in establishing rights.<sup>404</sup> Historically, some theorists, such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, used arguments that queers were mentally ill to argue that they should not be punished.<sup>405</sup> On the other hand, these theorists often advocated treatment rather than tolerance. Being designated mentally ill also resulted in a loss of civil rights, as the City Club noted.<sup>406</sup> Understandings of queerness as a medical or psychiatric problem also did not necessarily prohibit punitive measures. For example, the *Oregonian* argued that if a gay man was sick, he should not be legally prosecuted “just for being the way he is,” but some things “are a menace to others,” such as venereal disease, recruitment, violence, and pornography.<sup>407</sup> Nan Boyd argues that San Francisco publications’ use of vernacular terms such as “queer” and “queen” in place of medical terms like “invert,” “deviate,” and “homosexual” illustrated San Francisco’s greater acceptance and familiarity with gender and sexual transgression.<sup>408</sup> Portland’s debates about gay bars used almost entirely medical rather than vernacular terms.

Portland’s gay bar owners and their attorneys tried to make the council debates rest on customer behavior, rather than identities. Historian George Chauncey explains how liquor licensing increased governments’ ability to regulate public behavior. Bar owners and staff became responsible for enforcing government rules about public behavior because they faced license revocations if violations were discovered at their

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<sup>404</sup> Jennifer Terry writes about medical models and homosexuality.

<sup>405</sup> Harry Oosterhuis, “Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s ‘Step-Children of Nature:’ Psychiatry and the Making of Homosexual Identity,” in *Science and Homosexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 70.

<sup>406</sup> Portland City Club, “Oregon Mental Health Laws,” 282.

<sup>407</sup> *Oregonian*, “Council Mulls Treatment,” 21.

<sup>408</sup> Boyd, “Homos Invade S.F.!,” 75.

establishments. Liquor license requirements both increased the number of enforcers beyond liquor authority staff, and targeted bars, prominent public social spaces.<sup>409</sup> Portland's gay bar owners argued in their defense that they had enforced regulations and policed queer public behavior.

Chauncey argues that in New York, gay bars' limited legal options in the 1950s and 1960s generally led to defenses based on both denying queer customers and claiming that if any had been present, it was without managers' knowledge.<sup>410</sup> Possibly due to OLCC's greater, though limited, tolerance of gay bars, compared to New York's highly active liquor authority, Portland's gay bar owners generally acknowledged that their customers were primarily queer. They emphasized, however, that indecent acts did not occur at the bars. Lester Kennedy, owner of the Half Moon, noted that he had cooperated with the bureau and that his customers did not harm the public. "The guy sits and takes his beer and don't bother nobody else. If he does, he gets put out."<sup>411</sup> Damis countered police reports claiming that the main activity at Derek's Tavern was men cruising other men. He asserted that the primary activities instead were camaraderie and drinking, despite customers' sexual orientation. According to Akerson, Derek's and the Half Moon were "known as the cleanest taverns in town, the tightest run taverns in town. Nothing goes on there."<sup>412</sup> Kennedy noted that he had suspended "quite a few people that I knew that they was this way." However, he qualified, "they sit around and visit" most of the time, making it hard for

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<sup>409</sup> Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 336-337.

<sup>410</sup> Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 346.

<sup>411</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>412</sup> City Council Minutes, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

him to determine who was queer.<sup>413</sup> Haslett, Polechrones' attorney, agreed that "it is true that from time to time, certain customers of his have acted in such a suspicious manner that he has his curiosity as to whether or not they had certain abnormal sexual appetites," but when he observed them, they were orderly.<sup>414</sup>

The police argued that owners did not control customers' behavior. "The patrons openly practice their activities," the bureau reported about Mama Bernice's queer customers.<sup>415</sup> They particularly criticized the Harbor Club, as "the number one establishment in the City of Portland where persons of questionable moral habits, both homosexual and lesbian frequent... It is considered the most disorderly of all the 'gay' establishments in Portland."<sup>416</sup> The police described "males openly kissing each other, fondling each other, with no attempt to cover these activities."<sup>417</sup> A police report on the Half Moon similarly noted that "the activities are such that the males pair up, sitting around and conversing and in a sly manner, will caress and fondle each other..."<sup>418</sup> However, Puckett claimed that employees expelled any people that they observed "fondling."<sup>419</sup>

Portland's police complained that it was particularly hard for the bureau to suppress lesbian behavior at bars.<sup>420</sup> "Can't you arrest them for unbecoming conduct or something like that?" Councilor Bowes asked Lieutenant Crawford about the

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<sup>413</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 27 November 1964.

<sup>414</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 10 December 1964.

<sup>415</sup> Portland Police Bureau, Police Report, 12 November 1964, City Council Minutes Attachments, Stanley Parr Archives, Portland.

<sup>416</sup> Portland Police Bureau, Police Report.

<sup>417</sup> Cook, "Portland's Gay Bars."

<sup>418</sup> Portland Police Bureau, Police Report.

<sup>419</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>420</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 10 December 1964.

Milwaukee Tavern's lesbian customers. Crawford responded that it was difficult to make arrests because kissing between women was more socially accepted. Police officers perceived men kissing to be more uncontroversially sexual behavior.<sup>421</sup> More frequent arrests of gay men for sexual expression supports Jennifer Terry's argument that policing of lesbianism was "micropolitical," focusing more on "enforcing proper gender behavior in the private realm," than public spaces. Lesbians were portrayed as threatening families by rejecting roles as wives and conventional motherhood, while gay men were associated with public threats, such as bars.<sup>422</sup>

"How do we get them out legally?" asked Bowes. The council was not sure whether licenses could be legally denied based on clientele or if unlawful acts had to be committed on the premises. The issue was further complicated by Oregon law, which stated that obtaining a liquor license was not a right, but "a purely personal privilege."<sup>423</sup> Schunk argued that denying licenses was the only way to target queers when they could not legally make arrests, and claimed that this was what police and city officials were doing in San Francisco. Bean postulated that the recommendation of the city was not a legal matter because OLCC made the final, official decision. Earl agreed, adding that court decisions did not apply to the council because the council only issued recommendations "as to the moral habits of the owner and his good conduct" rather than final rulings. However, because OLCC usually followed the city's recommendations, the council assumed, in Earl's words, "If we don't

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<sup>421</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>422</sup> Jennifer Terry, "Theorizing Deviant Historiography," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3.2 (1991): 69.

<sup>423</sup> Oregonian, "City, State at Odds," 14.



recommend, they're out of business."<sup>424</sup> The council decided that issuing unfavorable license recommendations would both avoid illegal city action and close gay bars.

The council voted to issue negative recommendations for seven of the eight bars targeted by the police. While bars dominated by gay men were unanimously denied favorable recommendations, lesbian bars received more divided votes, but were still negatively evaluated. Demonstrating a shift in council prioritizing of vice threats since Lee's administration, when prostitution and gambling were targeted more vigorously than gay bars, the Old Glory was the only bar to receive a positive city recommendation. Schrunk noted that the owners, Roy and Imogene Cope, had cooperated with city requests. Although prostitutes continued to work in and outside of the bar, the Copes had "cleaned up one of the problems, of the lesbians that hung out there," in the words of the their attorney, W.F. Whitely. The council approved the license renewal by a three to two vote, with Schrunk, Earl, and Bowes supporting a favorable recommendation, despite their votes against the other bars. The difference, according to Schrunk, was that the other bars "had knowingly admitted that they catered to this type of clientele and they defended them."<sup>425</sup> His condemnation of gay bar owners and lawyers for openly defending their clientele was similar to criticism of the queer community's open and shameless behavior and suggested that desires to stigmatize queerness influenced the council decision.

The gay bars' lawyers appealed to OLCC. Noting that the council had explicitly stated that queer customers were its only grounds for negatively evaluating

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<sup>424</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.



the bars, OLCC overrode the city's unfavorable recommendations. According to Don Barnick, an OLCC administrator, "This doesn't mean that we're condoning this sort of thing, but the commission didn't feel it could go along with the city without any facts to justify license refusals." Barnick specifically cited the absence of arrests or liquor violations within the past year.<sup>426</sup>

OLCC's failure to preserve its records leaves its reasoning for issuing the licenses obscure. Calling OLCC members the "real heroes" of the debates, Damis believed that OLCC failed to endorse the city's negative recommendations because Oregon statutes did not afford a basis to deny the license renewals based on the council's stated reasons.<sup>427</sup> However, although Barnick stressed his hazy recollection more than thirty years later, he felt that OLCC's decision was influenced by both arguments for queers' legal rights and preference for the previous strategy of containment. He noted that bar customers tended to voluntarily segregate themselves based on their own identities, whether sexual, racial, or recreational interest, and go to locations where they felt comfortable. He argued that it was better to allow queers to "gravitate" toward places they chose than have them "spread over the city." He also felt that people were "entitled to go to a place they want to" and denying licenses based only on identity, without illegal conduct, was unfair.<sup>428</sup> However, Barnick also disagreed with the council's assessment of queers' presence in Portland. While he found the number of gay bars in Portland "amazing," he asserted that customers were

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<sup>425</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 3 December 1964.

<sup>426</sup> Oregon Journal, "OLCC Overrides Ban," 1.

<sup>427</sup> James Damis, interview by Beka Smith, 28 February 2002, possession of Beka Smith.

<sup>428</sup> Don Barnick, interview by Beka Smith, 3, 4 June 2002, possession of Beka Smith.

somewhat “timid” about expressing their queer identity. “The gays seemed to get along in a group and weren’t causing any problems that I was aware that were in violation of liquor laws,” he argued.<sup>429</sup> The divergence between Barnick and the council’s descriptions of gay bar customers’ threats and openness may reflect either unmotivated differences in observations, or differences in OLCC and council goals.

Schrunk agreed to cooperate with the OLCC decision, but addressed a public letter to Governor Mark Hatfield. He asked the governor to investigate and discuss gay bar licensing with OLCC. “I feel that continuation and, indeed, the further development of outlets catering to this particular type of individuals is not at all beneficial to the City of Portland or State of Oregon,” wrote Schrunk.<sup>430</sup> Including information on California’s licensing system, particularly the invalidation of licenses based on accusations of overt acts or solicitation, Schrunk asked that OLCC increase surveillance of the bars. Schrunk’s request was apparently not granted, as gay bar owners and customers claimed that the city and state did not take further actions against gay bars after OLCC’s decision.<sup>431</sup>

Schrunk vowed to close gay bars in subsequent years by using Portland’s police to monitor and record activities and increase arrests, but this was not implemented.<sup>432</sup> The city withheld the bars’ food and non-alcoholic beverage licenses for a period of months.<sup>433</sup> This succeeded in closing only the Harbor Club, because the Harbor was the only bar that served hard liquor. OLCC was forced to close the

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<sup>429</sup> Barnick, interview.

<sup>430</sup> Jack Ostergren, “Deviate Bar Control Sought,” *Oregon Journal*, 11 January 1965, 2.

<sup>431</sup> According to Holman, Akerson, and no further notations of OLCC citations in owners’ records.

<sup>432</sup> *Oregonian*, “Mayor Appeals Renewal of Seven Tavern Licenses,” *Oregonian*, 12 January 1965, 15.

Harbor because hard liquor licenses required food service. The Harbor, however, reopened in the Northwest as the Riptide, although former customers alleged that the Riptide was less welcoming of obviously queer customers.<sup>434</sup> According to writers and gay bar customers Staley, Burkart, and Holman, the city relented and granted food licenses to the other six bars when councilors heard that the owners planned to sue the city as a group.<sup>435</sup>

Schrunk implicitly requested newspaper coverage when he noted at a council meeting that although OLCC had overridden the council's recommendations, at least press coverage would spread the word that the city opposed gay bars.<sup>436</sup> This suggests that stigmatizing Portland's queer community and strengthening an anti-queer city reputation were part of the council's motivation. Marcia Pally notes that media coverage of obscenity issues can help create definitions of community standards that differ from community members' own opinions. More tolerant, or simply unconcerned citizens may have been less likely to express opposition or indifference to policies against gay bars with extensive media coverage for fear of being perceived as deviant themselves.<sup>437</sup> The *Oregon Journal* and *Oregonian* devoted many articles to the council gay bars debates and OLCC response, with surprisingly similar coverage. Both newspapers criticized the "almost unprecedented OLCC action" in not

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<sup>433</sup> Holman, "A Gay History," 5.

<sup>434</sup> Staley and Burkart, 8.

<sup>435</sup> Holman, "Gay History of Portland," 5.

<sup>436</sup> Portland City Council, Minutes, 17 December 1964, Stanley Parr City Archives, Portland.

<sup>437</sup> Marcia Pally, *Sex and Sensibility: Reflections on Forbidden Mirrors and the Will to Censor* (Hopewell, New Jersey: The Ecco Press, 1994), 68.

honoring the city's unfavorable recommendation, in the *Oregonian's* words.<sup>438</sup> The *Oregonian* particularly condemned the OLCC for failing to issue a warning to gay bar owners not to permit open queer behavior at their establishments.<sup>439</sup> Throughout the debates, the local newspapers reminded readers of dangers associated with queers, including increased venereal disease, pornography, recruitment of children, and occasional "ghastly crimes."<sup>440</sup>

Schrunk tried to draw citizens into his anti-sexual deviance campaign. "We cannot, in government and law enforcement, do the job alone" he announced.<sup>441</sup> The "Supreme Court is so anxious to protect the freedom of the few who pander this filth at the expense of the freedom of the many who abhor it... The former have been the vocal minority through their expensive attorneys, and it is now time for us to become the vocal majority," he claimed.<sup>442</sup> Despite indications of popular support for Schrunk's anti-sexual deviance campaign in newspapers and letters, the initiative against gay bars and media coverage foundered quickly after OLCC's decision. Schrunk's anti-pornography work continued into the early 1970s, but with decreased media coverage, few quantifiable results, and Schrunk's own admissions of legal limitations.<sup>443</sup>

It was not uncommon for anti-gay bar campaigns to dissipate quickly. Cities often initiated crackdowns on gay bars as a somewhat official statement of their

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<sup>438</sup> *Oregonian*, "Mayor Appeals Renewal," 15.

<sup>439</sup> *Oregonian*, "Council Mulls Treatment," 21.

<sup>440</sup> *Oregonian*, "Council Mulls Treatment," 21.

<sup>441</sup> *Oregon Journal*, "Smut Magazine," 4.

<sup>442</sup> *Oregon Journal*, "Mayor Calls," 4.

opposition to queers. For example, Miami's campaign against gay bars began and ended within a year, according to Fejes. He argues that the failure to maintain anti-queer initiatives demonstrates that the city's ultimate goal was not closing bars or making queers leave town, but instead to reinforce stigmatization of queerness. "Once that point was made, the campaign was over," asserts Fejes.<sup>444</sup> This argument is supported by Portland's sharp drop in city anti-queer actions and discussions, Schrunk's request for media coverage, and Schrunk's claim that the council recommended the Old Glory because it did not try to defend queers. However, in addition to stigmatizing queerness, Schrunk was committed to closing disreputable businesses downtown to promote economic growth. Some of the gay bars, such as the Model Inn and Old Glory, were later closed or relocated for urban renewal. Gay bars, connected with vice and crime in public perceptions, did not appeal to business investors, or middle and upper-class customers that Schrunk hoped to attract to the central city.

City policy toward gay bars was a "thorny" and "perplexing social problem," wrote the *Oregonian* in 1964.<sup>445</sup> Influenced by increased discussion and awareness of queer communities, city policy toward gay bars in Portland was perceived as both more important and complicated during Schrunk's administration than during Lee's term as mayor. Multiple opinions about legality, effectiveness, and the nature of queerness complicated the council debates about gay bars. Schrunk used perceptions

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<sup>443</sup> Schrunk expressed discontent with legal limitations on local anti-obscenity actions in several letters to constituents, such as his letter to Van Hoomissen.

<sup>444</sup> Fejes, "Murder, Perversion, and Moral Panic," 342.

<sup>445</sup> *Oregonian*, "Council Mulls Treatment," 21.

that Portland's queer community was growing more publicly visible to gain support for his reform initiatives, including combating sexual deviance and reshaping the central city. Although many people did not support gay rights, gay bars were able to stay open because the legality and effectiveness of local government actions against queers were challenged from a variety of standpoints and interests.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Portland's policies toward gay bars depended largely on mayors' goals and perceptions of Portland's queer community. Voters generally elected conservative mayors, who did not direct police or city actions against gay bars or other forms of vice. Contrasting with general city inactivity concerning gay bars and vice, reform mayors Lee and Schrunk initiated two distinct campaigns to suppress gay bars.

Portland's lack of social and economic interest in tolerating queer communities made suppression of gay bars popular components of reform initiatives. However, because of Lee and Schrunk's different reform goals and different public perceptions of the city's queer communities, they framed their actions differently and received different responses from Portland's voters, political and economic leaders, newspapers, and council members.

### The Size of Portland's Queer Community

Perceptions of queers' growing presence in Portland may have reflected real increases. Writers of queer history describe growth in urban queer communities throughout the U.S., especially during and after World War II.<sup>446</sup> Historian Tom Cook argues that Portland "had a thriving gay underground" in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>447</sup> However, there are also suggestions that Portland's queer community was somewhat small. For example, vice officer Dennis Baker noted, "I was told by the party I was going around with, [that] a new face in town invites this, is quite a drawer, quite in

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<sup>446</sup> For example, D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 40.

<sup>447</sup> Cook, "Portland's Gay Bars."

demand, if you are of this type.”<sup>448</sup> Unknown people at Portland’s gay bars were objects of interest and, in some cases, suspicion. Baker, and interviewed gay bar customers, implied that the number of gay bar customers was small enough that people recognized each other.<sup>449</sup>

There are no records documenting the actual size of Portland’s queer community. Known gay bars did increase in the area near Alder and Yamhill Street between the administrations of Lee and Schrunk. However, the perceived increase of gay bars throughout the city may have been due to increased public awareness and different definitions of what constituted a gay bar. More bars with mixed clientele may have been identified as gay. Non-queer Portlanders were more aware of the presence of queers after many newspaper articles, popular books, and state and national political discussions of sexual deviants in the 1950s. It is also possible that a growing and increasingly open queer community in Portland augmented the number and public presence of gay bars in the central city.

However, actual numbers of queers and gay bars were less important to council decisions than public perceptions of the size and visibility of Portland’s queer community. City actions were not a simple response to the presence of queers in Portland, as demonstrated by Peterson’s inaction despite widespread discussions of sexual deviance and the continuing operation of gay bars in Portland. Perceptions of a growing and open queer community increased public support for vice control and

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<sup>448</sup> Cook, “Portland’s Gay Bars.”

<sup>449</sup> King, interview, and anonymous, interview.



reform initiatives, but mayoral goals were the catalysts in instigating city actions against gay bars.

### **Politicians' Motivations**

Lee tried to close gay bars because they were perceived as criminal. Her reform called for cleaning up the city by trying to eradicate all criminality and immorality in Portland that could be addressed with law enforcement. Her primary vice target was gambling, but she also opposed gay bars. At the time, gambling was perceived as a greater threat to the city's reputation and safety than gay bars. Gay bars were seen as disreputable and criminal, but not yet highly publicly visible or strongly associated with violence against children or central city blight. Gay bars were not generally supported by public, business, or political interests during Lee's administration, making them viable targets for suppression. Suppressing queer communities did not, however, carry the level of importance Schrunk was able to draw upon during his administration, after increased discussion of sexual deviance in newspapers and legislatures locally and nationally.

Schrunk did not implement a crackdown on all criminality and vice, like Lee, instead targeting sexual deviance. He particularly focused on gay bars and obscene literature and entertainment, which he presented as signs and causes of a dangerous influx of queers into the city. He connected suppressing sexual deviance, particularly gay bars and pornography vendors downtown, with a broader campaign to attract central city investment and visitors. Drawing on existing popular and political depictions of queers as a highly important and menacing social problem, Schrunk

presented Portland's queer community as a central threat to the city's reputation, safety, and economic well-being. Linking gay bars to the degradation of the central city, Schrunk gained public, business, and political support for both his reforms against sexual deviance and city government actions to promote downtown investment.

City councilors favored actions against gay bars for a number of reasons. During Lee's administration, the goals of the council were fairly straightforward. The council wanted to halt drag performances and discourage large public gatherings of queers. During Schrunk's administration, councilors also tried to close gay bars, but admitted that gay bars would continue to exist, although in different, and perhaps more hidden, locations. They wanted city actions against gay bars, however, to strengthen Portland's reputation as intolerant toward queers. Although this was partly intended to discourage queer migration to the city, the councilors seemed more influenced by desires to make Portland's queer community less publicly visible. Schrunk's promotion of downtown economic growth also encouraged efforts to limit the visibility of "undesirable" central city locations, such as gay bars.

According to Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, deviance becomes a more prominent issue when dissension and conflicting factions increase.<sup>450</sup> Although groups may agree on the nature of the problem, debate about solutions "almost inevitably" occurs.<sup>451</sup> Although participants in the 1964-65 city council debates agreed that gay bars were not desirable, greater discussion and awareness of queer

communities in the 1950s and 1960s complicated the issue. Participants in the 1964-65 council debates advanced different views of potential threats, legal limits on local government actions, and effective methods of dealing with the perceived problem of gay bars. The greater diversity in suggestions for city policy, increased discussion of legal limitations, and claims that the city's queer community was growing in size and openness may suggest that queerness was less definitively marginalized and criminalized in the mid 1960s than during Lee's administration. The rights of gay bars and queer communities, however, were far from universally accepted.

### **Definitions of Queerness**

Changing definitions of queerness influenced Portland's debates about gay bars. Explanations of queerness as immoral and criminal were somewhat overshadowed by medical definitions in the 1950s and early 1960s, between Lee and Schrunk's administrations. Criminality and gender transgression were not tolerated during Lee's administration, but were considered less menacing than medical definitions that added threats to children, illness, and contagion to concerns about queers. Schrunk drew on medical explanations of queerness and the perceived link between queers and crimes against children to present gay bars as a major threat to the city.

Different theories about the causes and characteristics of queerness produced different markers of how politicians distinguished queers. During Lee's administration, media, city, and police officials pointed to nonconformance with

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<sup>450</sup> Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*

gender norms as signs of queerness. Although gender transgression was still associated with queerness during Schrunk's administration, politicians, police, and newspapers increasingly emphasized the presence of queers outside of expected, disreputable locations and used metaphors of contagion. Despite discourse about illness, categorization and treatment of gay bar customers as immoral and criminal persisted. They were, for example, frequently referred to in police reports as people of "questionable morals."

### **The Importance of Gay Bars**

Gay bars were prominent targets in anti-queer campaigns. As public spaces, they were more accessible to city and police actions than more informal queer gathering locations, such as house parties. They were often the most visible queer institution for both queers and non-queers. Particularly important because discrimination limited other public gathering places, gay bars were also influential in the formation of queer communities and identities. According to scholar Nancy Achilles, people who went to gay bars for reasons other than curiosity or to harass queer customers usually already identified themselves as queer. However, they developed a personal and group definition of "what a homosexual is" at gay bars, by meeting other people.<sup>452</sup> A 1960 Daughters of Bilitis questionnaire found that 51 percent of lesbians and 68 percent of gay men went to gay bars at least occasionally, although their disproportionately white and middle-class membership may have made

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(Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 79.

<sup>451</sup> Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 11, 29 32.

<sup>452</sup> Achilles, "The Homosexual Bar," 29.

their findings most applicable to white, middle-class gay men and lesbians.<sup>453</sup>

Historians have suggested that gay bars were of more importance to working-class queers, and less central to queer people of color.

Gay bars, as public and social locations, helped form visible queer groups. Although gay bars played an important role in creating queer communities and identities, they can also be over-emphasized by historians. As Brett Beemyn notes, many queer people were excluded from or less interested in gay bars, particularly because of race.<sup>454</sup> However, although gay bars do not explain the experiences of all queer people, studying government policies toward gay bars does illustrate official and public motivations and perceptions concerning queer communities, as gay bars were among the most public, visible, and targeted queer locations.

### **Future Inquiry**

There are several areas that I address only perfunctorily in this thesis. For example, interviewed gay bar customers indicated that house parties were also important queer social spaces in Portland. House parties were less public spaces, and in other cities, and most likely Portland, were highly important to queer communities of color. Exploration of parties would also address class issues, as interviewed people claimed that wealthier queers rarely went to bars, but often attended parties and private clubs. Further research could address whether parties hosted mixed groups or reinforced class and racial separations in queer communities. This could also include analysis of how different social spaces may have produced different group identities

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<sup>453</sup> The Ladder," DOB Questionnaire Reveals Some Comparisons Between Male and Female

and relationships both with other queer groups and non-queers. It would also be interesting to explore how less intense police and city scrutiny of parties, compared to gay bars, affected group identities and actions.

Exploring how Portland later transitioned to a city known as queer-tolerant, as well as how anti-queer arguments became associated with conservatives rather than reformists would be an important area of future inquiry. Nan Hunter writes that cities began to add sexual orientation as a protected civil right in the 1970s, leading to a backlash of repeal campaigns in various cities by the end of the decade. These opponents of queer rights based their arguments on suppressing expressions of queerness rather than queer acts or identities.<sup>455</sup> Anti-queer arguments also seemed to change from being based primarily in criminality during Lee's administration, to medical explanations during Schrunk's administrations, to current arguments based in politicized religious fundamentalism. Tracing the process and reasons for this change nationally and in Portland would be interesting.

It also might be productive to compare Portland to cities other than Miami, San Francisco, and New York, particularly cities that more easily compare with Portland in size, demographics, and political climate. I depended primarily on these cities because they were the sites of published work that seemed most applicable to this thesis, because they included substantial analysis of local government policies toward gay bars. However, New York, San Francisco, and Miami were substantially larger, more diverse, and had greater economic and cultural incentives to tolerate queers. It might

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Homosexuals," *The Ladder* 4 (September 1960): 17.

be interesting, for example, to compare Portland with Seattle. Seattle was closer in size and location, and had similar defense-industry based growth during World War II, but, according to Quintard Taylor, had a liberal reputation quite different from Portland's general conservatism.<sup>456</sup> Comparing Seattle and Portland could evaluate how liberalism affected or failed to influence local governments' responses to gay bars.

### **Vice as Invasive Immorality**

Both Lee and Schrunk connected gay bars and vice with immoral outsiders. Ignoring Portland's long history of tolerating vice, Schrunk and Lee argued that they were protecting Portland's traditional morality and respectability by suppressing vice and gay bars. They countered public opposition to reform by presenting their initiatives against gay bars as actions to exclude disreputable outsiders and preserve Portland's presentation as moral.

Historians Terence O'Donnell and Thomas Vaughan note "the belief long held, and indeed strongly held today, that Oregon is an Eden which must be protected, kept unsullied."<sup>457</sup> The presentation of Portland as a moral location under attack also informed complaints about the legal limitations placed on city government's actions against gay bars and vice. For example, Schrunk protested to Senator Thomas Dodd, about obscene literature, "None of the filth on our markets is printed in Oregon, but we cannot legally protect ourselves from it coming in from other states or

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<sup>454</sup> Beemyn, "A Queer Capital," 188, 200.

<sup>455</sup> Hunter, "Identity, Speech and Equality," 128.

<sup>456</sup> Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 228.



countries.”<sup>458</sup> Police, media, and city officials claimed that local actions against queers were being limited by court decisions, to the city’s detriment. Arguments that Portland was intrinsically moral and reputable, but unable to protect itself from outside sources of moral degradation, generated support for anti-queer actions. These arguments, however, were more rhetorical than accurate. They enabled Portlanders’ historic tolerance of vice, while absolving city leaders and long-established white middle and upper-class families from responsibility for immorality.

### Effectiveness

Lee and Schrunk required support from citizens, newspapers, and local economic and political leaders in order to implement reforms, including suppression of gay bars, in Portland. Both Lee and Schrunk produced negative city council evaluations for gay bars’ liquor license renewals, but were impeded by OLCC. Growing awareness of the possibility of queer legal rights also limited city actions against gay bars during Schrunk’s administration.

According to historian Joseph Uris, public moral outrage is generally the basis of popular demand for reform. This outrage occurs “when the sum of the factors revealed to the public is sufficiently in violation of important moral values,” writes Uris.<sup>459</sup> However, as Cohn and Gallagher note, “widespread publicity is not a sufficient condition for mass arousal.”<sup>460</sup> While Portland newspapers frequently covered sexual deviance in the 1950s and 1960s, public condemnation of gay bars did

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<sup>457</sup> O’Donnell and Vaughan, *Portland*, 23.

<sup>458</sup> Terry Schrunk, to Thomas Dodd, 11 January 1965, Terry Schrunk Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

<sup>459</sup> Uris, “Trouble in River City,” 231.



not peak until Schrunk connected gay bars with the perceived threats of sexual deviance and moral and economic degradation of the central city, and dissipated quickly.

While reform mayors Lee and Schrunk tried to draw on public outrage about Portland's queer community and vice, they had limited success in developing consensus for broad reforms. For example, descriptions of corruption in the Vollmer Report were an important component in public rejection of Riley's administration and Lee's election. However, a 1968 City Club report found that none of the Vollmer Report's suggestions had been implemented. The City Club described "monumental inertia exhibited on the part of elected city hall officials respecting the recommendations of the Vollmer Report, the Public Administration Service Survey and other studies whenever such recommendations required structural changes in the city government."<sup>461</sup> While Portlanders' desired an upstanding reputation, they were reluctant to support major changes in the city's policies and structures, particularly reforms that might raise taxes or eliminate benefits they enjoyed from vice activities.

Efforts to close gay bars and implement reforms in Portland subsided quickly. Schrunk was able to convince the public that sexual deviance was a sufficiently pressing problem to justify council actions against gay bars. However, after OLCC failed to endorse the council's recommendations, he was unable to convince the public to support further anti-sexual deviance actions. Although the council also tried to close gay bars during Lee's administration, she was generally less successful than

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<sup>460</sup> Cohn and Gallagher, "Gay Movements," 83.

Schrunk in garnering public support for anti-vice actions. Her clean up campaign demanded more from the public, by targeting all vice rather than primarily locations connected with sexual deviance.

Portlanders generally supported reform and city actions against gay bars when presented as combating invasive immorality and improving the city's reputation. However, public support faltered when reform restricted business and recreational opportunities that citizens enjoyed under traditional, conservative mayoral administrations. Portland voters and business leaders responded more positively to Schrunk's anti-sexual deviance campaign than Lee's measures against all criminality. Lee was attacked by newspapers and citizens while in office and served only one term. Schrunk, mayor for sixteen years, was elected to four consecutive terms and received positive media coverage. While Schrunk was more successful politically than Lee and was able to gain support for economic reforms, both mayors failed to eradicate gay bars or initiate a long-term campaign against Portland's queer community.

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<sup>461</sup> Portland City Club, "Report on Law Enforcement," 99.

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